

# SPANISH FRONT

Spain, regarded by many as a backward and even decadent country, has come vividly to the forefront of the news with its Civil War. Two conflicting forces are seen to have been at work : a growing democratic power, with a desire to end the semi-feudal nature of society, and, at the same time, a violent anti-democratic reaction. They have met in as savage a conflict as Europe has ever seen.

How has all this arisen ? How is it working itself out ? What will be its effects outside Spain ? How does it affect British power in the Mediterranean ?

These and other questions are answered by *Spanish Front*. The author knows his Spain from end to end, and his book not only has permanent value as a brief survey of Spanish history and of events leading to the Civil War—it is also a shrewd study of the country and the people, and a clear, authoritative statement on a burning question of the hour.

# SPANISH FRONT

*by*

CARLOS PRIETO

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A  
TODOS MIS BUENOS AMIGOS EN ESPAÑA  
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# SPANISH FRONT

## I

### THE BACKGROUND

WHEN English people hear the words "Spain and Spaniards," they think of a compact region in the south-west of Europe inhabited by a single race of dark-skinned, dark-haired people who are all more or less alike in physique, appearance, and mentality. Everybody knows that the Pyrenees mountains have "set it apart from the rest of Europe," and one might conclude that Spain had been specially placed to enable a homogeneous people to exist and to pass a peaceful life, undisturbed by the political and economic turmoils which during the last generation have left the rest of Europe like a quivering jelly that is liable to collapse the moment the disturbance passes a certain intensity.

In a sense, all this is superficially true. Yet, a little acquaintance with the country shows what a curious mixture of races and how strange a complexity of mentalities exist in the Peninsula. A glance at a contour map shows us that all Spain is divided into definite geographical sections by great ranges of mountains and large rivers. A little exercise of the imagination indicates to us that, at some rather remote period of history, Spain must have been joined to the African continent. One has only to pass across the Straits of Gibraltar or the Mediterranean, and

glance casually at the north African landscape, to recognize immediately its resemblance to that of southern Spain. Perhaps still more striking, this time to the ear, is the resemblance between the tunes of so many Spanish folk songs and dances and those of the inhabitants of northern Africa. It looks as if slices of barren tableland, fringed by strips of rich soil in which is to be found a full tropical finery, had been lifted from Africa and placed casually in southern Europe. When we consider those great dividing mountain ranges and rivers, and the individualism and local patriotism of Spaniards, it is not difficult to appreciate the reasons for the simple historical fact that the achievement of any measure of politico-social unity must always be a matter of great difficulty.

One decides at last to regard Spain as a European detachment from Africa, with a whole host of African characteristics manifesting themselves in landscape and people. As Havelock Ellis and other penetrating writers have pointed out, there is still something savage and of aboriginal primitiveness in the best sense in the majority of the Spanish people. Historians inform us that the race once consisted of Celts and Iberians and a hybrid race, the Celto-Iberians, fringed here and there by offshoots from other earlier races, of which the Basque is the most important survivor. The Iberians are said to have come from Africa, the Celts from France, and the Basques from—God knows where! It is, however, agreed that these races should be considered as the native or basic races of Spain. There were other and extremely important infiltrations. Long before the Christian era, Phœnician mariners and merchants sailed from Tyre and established settlements in southern Spain. They were essentially traders, and not military adventurers or conquerors. In



Cadiz and other places they opened stores and bartered with the savage but shy and suspicious Iberians. From the Phœnician headquarters in north Africa—Carthage—other Tyrians established a considerable trade with southern Spanish ports, and we may assume that in this peaceful commerce there would be intermarriage, and as a result the gradual evolution on the southern Spanish mainland of new types with strong Oriental strains. These people would become the merchant princes of their neighbourhoods. To the eastern coast of Spain, to Catalonia and southwards, came Greek triremes from Marseilles, propelled by fair-haired slaves, to found small trading posts. But these little Greek settlements rarely achieved an importance which would entitle them to be called anything but mere encampments. The Greeks did not found cities or towns of importance; yet they cannot be left entirely out of the picture.

So at an early date in European history we find in the Spanish Peninsula a race and intermixture of races which we must needs regard as chiefly African, with a tinge of the Oriental. When the Romans defeated the Carthaginians in the struggle for Mediterranean power in the First Punic War (241 B.C.), the Carthaginian general, Hamilcar Barca (father of the celebrated Hannibal), decided that it would not be difficult to make good his defeat by the conquest of Iberia. Hamilcar was followed in this enterprise by his son-in-law Hasdrubal, and then by his son Hannibal. However, the Romans were not content to rest on their laurels. To permit the Carthaginians the free possession of Spain would have meant that the victory achieved in the Punic War would have been largely negated, for those in command of Spain would command the Mediterranean. Therefore the Romans came to Spain, and with their re-

markable military efficiency soon established themselves, and virtually obliterated Phœnicians, Greeks, and Carthaginians—though not their racial influence—and began in the usual Roman manner to make their deep mark, and impose by force their dominating influence upon the native inhabitants.

Roman writers have left records of the people they found in the Peninsula, but it is to Strabo, the careful Greek geographer who lived in the first century B.C., that we must go for fuller information. He speaks of the remarkable courage, the ecstatic ferocity, and the inherent pride of the Iberians. He informs us of the difference in behaviour of the people in different parts of the country : of the agility and frugality and sombre nature of some of them ; of the gaiety and carefree nature of others. Curiously enough, Strabo records that a tribe in the south was much the most civilized, and perhaps this may refer to prehistoric people in the neighbourhood of Altamira, where traces of a comparatively sophisticated art have been found. It would appear that a tradition of these civilized people went back for about six thousand years before Strabo's time ; and, indeed, there seems little reason to doubt it. That solemn, and, on the whole, accurate Roman historian Livy (born 59 B.C.) recorded that the Romans found the Iberians to be a "stubborn, restless, and rebellious race"—which reminds us of that rather similar race the Irish. He refers also to their impassive dignity, to the nobility of their demeanour, and to the intensity of religious feeling to be found amongst them. Conventional historians since that time, and down to our own days, have been strangely insistent in pointing out that the Romans obliterated the native characteristics of the Iberians, but it would be interesting to know the opinion of biologists in regard to the possible obliteration

of the *racial* characteristics of those old Iberians. To anybody who has read what exists of their history, and noted their temperament, it would appear to be fairly obvious that they have transmitted to most Spaniards of our own acquaintance the characteristics noted by Strabo and Livy. Do we not find scattered about Spain men and women who are restless, rebellious, dignified, and with a very apparent nobility in their manner, combined with a religious feeling which shows itself vividly in Church and bull-ring ?

It is a mistake to imagine on the one hand that the Romans did not leave their mark, as it is also a profound and very common mistake to imagine that the Spaniards are a "Latin" race. Nothing is more foolish than the statement to be found in nine books out of ten about Spain—to the effect that the Spaniards are "Latins." Before the Romans finally incorporated Spain in the Roman Empire there were nearly two hundred years of bloody warfare, in which Iberian courage stood like granite against the highly organized legions of the Romans. When the last battle was won, the Iberian race, though exhausted, remained firmly on the soil. They accepted many of the customs and usages of the conquerors, but one of them never : the Roman idea of discipline and team-work. Iberian individualism remained. It is all very well to recognize that the Iberians took advantage of such external matters as roads, coinage, methods of building and conducting business. The acceptance of such *customs* does not necessarily change the basic nature of a *race*. Possibly the Romans absorbed from the Iberians as much as the Iberians got from the Romans. Many Spaniards, if we may now call them by this name, became extremely influential Romans : we have only to think of the Spanish-born Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, the Emperor Theodosius, Seneca,

Lucan, Martial, Quintillian, and many others. It is true that the old Iberian language (though not Basque) disappeared, and a dialect of Latin took its place ; it is also true that under Roman rule Spain was converted to Christianity. But neither of these facts justify anybody in assuming that the principal biological features of the Iberians had disappeared. A modern Spaniard is as different in appearance, nature, temperament and outlook from a modern Italian as an Irishman is from an Englishman.

The disintegration of the Roman Empire began about the end of the fourth century. Hordes of barbarians had begun to sweep south-westwards across the Rhine, through France, and over the Pyrenees. Of these the Vandals reached the southern coast of Spain, and even crossed the Straits of Gibraltar into Africa. They were followed by Visigoths, and, later, by Goths and other Germanic races. These peoples detested the Romans, and in their own barbaric manner did everything they could to obliterate Roman influence and civilization wherever they went. The Germanic invaders were in every sense utter barbarians—illiterate, rude, undignified, and, to Spaniards and Romans alike, entirely disgusting. They did not make themselves sufficiently acceptable to form a noteworthy fusion with existing races in the Peninsula. "Aryans" and non-Christian, they had one important advantage over their enemies : they were powerful in a military sense. But even military domination does not always mean that the conquerors join with the conquered to form a new race ; and by this time Christianity amongst the Spaniards formed an insuperable barrier against mixture with the invaders. By their activities against the Christians the barbarians from the north merely strengthened the power of the Roman Church. At last one of their leaders gave up the struggle and himself joined

the Church. A Gothic monarchy was established, and a Gothic aristocracy of military barbarians ruled the land. Persecution of non-Christians began. Jewish traders and settlers who had established themselves in many parts of Spain were now battered and hounded, and for a period of nearly three hundred years Gothic blood was held to be the best. It reminds us of Nazi Germany and "non-Aryans."

Most of the Romans, especially those in the armies, had been withdrawn from Spain while the country groaned under its new invaders. Spaniards turned towards Africa, where Mohammedanism was making great progress with the useful aid of fire and sword, inspiring the native Berbers with a roaring zeal for the new religion. The Jews in Spain looked towards the Semitic race which was being so successful in Africa to come to their aid, and once more Spain was invaded—this time from the south. New conquerors overran the Peninsula, and, to quote an old chronicle: "Spain was broken into fragments; her children were dead or in exile. Forgotten was the sound of her singing, and her language was converted into alien words and into the speech of a strange people. The Moors clothed themselves in the gay attire of their spoils; the reins of their horses were as fire, their faces were black as pitch, their eyes shone like burning candles; their horses were swift as leopards, and the riders fiercer than a wolf in the sheepfold at night. The vile people of Africa were now exalted on high."

The new invaders consisted of Arabs and Berbers, Arabs being the dominant race. It is generally recognized that the Arab is one of the finest types of mankind. He is an excellent specimen: an inquisitive, acquisitive gentleman; treacherous and hospitable, dignified and intelligent. The Berbers, on the other hand, were (and are) short, thick-set men, robust, fatalistic, and with the inclination to excel

as assassins. These two new races gradually blended into one people, and in the course of a few centuries showed the rest of the world that they were capable of achieving an advanced civilization. As time went on, fresh immigrations into Spain gave the Berbers a numerical (though not intellectual) superiority over the Arabs. The various races in Spain had by the eleventh century reached a point of intermixture in which an *entirely new race* was being evolved, and it is to that period in history that we must look for the real beginnings of the people we now know as "Spaniards."

We have already seen that on the soil there remained the old Iberians; that around the coast there were small elements of Greeks and of Phœnicians; that there were considerable numbers of Carthaginians; that there had been a Roman invasion followed by the Christianization of the country; that there had been a widespread "Aryan" invasion from the north, and now there was a Spain dominated by Arab-Berber influence.

Why, in view of this conglomeration of peoples from all points of the compass, do writers persist in referring to Spaniards as a "Latin" race!

The modern Spaniard may be the resultant mixture of *all* these peoples; he may be a mixture of two or more of them; or he may be racially almost any one of them, Latin included. To say that all Spaniards are Latins is sheer nonsense—as great nonsense as to claim Aryan blood for all Nazified Germans. The observant tourist travelling about Spain can, with a little practice, identify almost any of the component races. If we bear in mind this racial-historical background, and also the physical characteristics of a country separated into compartments by great mountain ranges and rivers, it is not difficult to appreciate the astounding differences of physique, temperament, and mentality that

are to be found on all sides. The dominating factors are : first the Celto-Ibero-African-Semitic origin of the modern Spaniard ; secondly, the Aryan strain, which is comparatively slight ; thirdly, the influence of Christianity ; and fourthly, the Arab-Berber racial influence combined with that of Mohammedan civilization.

It is all these *blended together* which have produced modern Spain and the modern Spaniard. It is absurd to separate them out and to assert, as propagandists for Roman civilization do, that the Spaniard is essentially a Latin.

From the eleventh century, when Mohammedan cultural influence was at its height, the general political situation in Spain changed considerably, with important effects upon social life and culture. The centralized Caliphate of Córdoba broke up into a number of small kingdoms, which were much inclined to fight among themselves. This was the opportunity for the Christians, who began a war to drive out the Moslems, and the struggle continued intermittently until the year 1492, when the united Christian forces of Ferdinand and Isabella finally defeated the Moslems at Granada, and thereby ended the long period during which, under the influence of the Mohammedans, the Spaniards had developed into a highly civilized race. But again, it would be a great mistake to regard Spanish civilization as an offspring of Moslem. It is true that in travelling about Spain, especially in the south, one sees on every hand very impressive signs of Moslem culture. The same influence is also apparent in the literature of the period. The Moors were responsible for the introduction into Spain of a remarkably fine architecture, the cultivation of the sciences and literature, and the development of law. The success of Ferdinand and Isabella at Granada in 1492 merely

marked the beginning of the development of a *politically* unified Spain. The Catholic monarchs began their great effort to centralize authority for purely political purposes ; they initiated the policy of imperialism ; and they set about creating a complete religious unity in the Peninsula. Thus, at home there was a revision of the system of government and administration ; religious unity called for the ruthless suppression of those who were Jewish or Moslem by religion ; and imperialism showed itself in the conquest and exploitation of America by the Conquistadores, who followed up the discovery of America by Columbus. The Inquisition flourished ; absolutism and centralization were the orders of the day. Now, for the first time in her long history, we find all Spain dominated by the monarchy and Church with a canalized policy which was proving to be highly successful. A thirst for conquest and exploitation showed itself, and the country began to grow rich from imports of gold, raw materials, and slaves from America.

The golden age had arrived.

In the beginning of the sixteenth century Spain was the first nation in the world, and had the first empire on which "the sun never sets." The extraordinarily tough Spanish race spread itself in the New World from Florida and California to Cape Horn. The king at that time, Charles V., as well as being Holy Roman Emperor, held the greater part of Italy, Holland, Flanders, Luxembourg, and Franche Comté, as well as important territories in Africa and islands scattered over the globe. His son, the sombre Philip II., added new lands to Spain, in which was for a time included Portugal. Spain was now at her zenith as a world power. But for a nation to have such widespread possessions and influence brings in its train many inconveniences, amongst which are the suspicions and envy



of other states. Unless a rich country is immune from the attack of its enemies, it will be attacked—and generally in the weakest spot. Taking the broad view of history, it appears that empires swell to bursting-point, and are then deflated by a natural—"Darwinian"—process which includes attacks from outside and disintegration at home. The one binding force in the Spanish Empire was the Roman Catholic Church. It has been a cunning politico-religious cement which held both the people and the body politic together (until the people grew rather tired of it). The monarchical rulers in Spain and their military supporters amongst the land-rewarded aristocracy fully realized this important fact. Hence the Catholic card was played by king and nobles at every possible opportunity. Wherever a Spanish sword went it was accompanied by the Holy Cross. The Holy Inquisition at home was used to eliminate heretics, but also as a most valuable instrument for taking property from two of the richest sections of the community. Moslems were robbed of wealth which families had gathered throughout centuries ; and the same applied to the Jews. By grants from rulers, by gifts, and by its universal trickery, the Roman Catholic Church in Spain became by far the richest organization in the community. It has been for purely political and economic reasons (*i.e.* because of its greed for power and money) that the Roman Catholic Church has been attacked and put in its place as a non-property owner and non-political organization in nearly every country of Spanish America. It came to own between eighty and ninety per cent. of the accumulated wealth of the Peninsula, and no more than fifty years ago it still owned at least sixty per cent. ! It has a hold on almost as much to-day.

That is one of the prime factors in the modern unrest in Spain.

## II

### THE RISE AND FALL OF AN EMPIRE

THE discovery of America by Columbus in 1492 was the starting-point of one of the greatest episodes of exploitation in the history of humanity. For a period of about fifty years Spaniards made the best of their opportunities in the New World. This is not the place for an account of the exploits of Cortez, who in 1519-20, with a handful of intrepid adventurers, conquered a warlike race and brought the magnificent empire of Mexico under the banner of Spain. From 1530 to 1535 Pizarro took the empire of the Incas in South America ; and Valdivia marched far into the temperate zone and in the 1540's subdued the whole of Chile. The conquest of the River Plate, Venezuela, and Central America followed. Wealth began to pour into Spain, and when wealth pours into a country it is usually taken by those who hold power : in Spain, the monarchy with its satellite aristocracy and—the Church. It is frequently claimed that the work of the Conquistadores was dominated by Church influence in the desire to christianize millions of natives in the New World. Nothing of the sort. It was fundamentally a quest for land and wealth. There was very little of the "*Love thy neighbour as thyself*" spirit about the whole business, as testified by a very famous Roman Catholic priest Bartolomé de las Casas, a Franciscan, who revolted against the enslavement, torture, and butchery of the native races in America.

Nemesis awaited her opportunity, which showed itself in the years following. As a result of their ruthless measures, the Spaniards were able to bring to the motherland enormous "wealth." But was it wealth in the real sense of the word? Did it benefit the ordinary people? It consisted for the most part of gold and raw materials, which were immediately taken by king, aristocracy, land-owners, Church, and great merchants. The ordinary people benefited hardly at all; and, as a consequence, unrest began to show itself on every side. For a period of about two hundred and fifty years the glut of wealth, ill-distributed and ill-used, proved to be in the nature of a disease which caused the steady decline of Spain both abroad and at home. There was a better period during the reign of Charles III. (1759-88), during which this fairly "enlightened despot" did many good things in the interest of the people. He founded agricultural colonies, divided common lands, abolished tax on grain, bestowed franchises upon the arts, improved industry, brought peace in the Mediterranean, and opened new markets abroad.

Of the period before him it has been written that Spain had become a country of the blind, suffering a darkness so ignominious that there was not a single man in any college or university able to light a candle to aid those who were curious about natural science. Poetry lay on its deathbed, and the drama had declined to a state of complete insipidity. Yet the power of the Catholic Church remained to such a point that medical doctors had to make use of pills that bore the label "Catholic"; and woe betide the leech who did not use them generously in his practice! It was in the reign of Charles II., who did so much good for Spain, that the United States won their freedom from the English crown. So discontented were the Spanish colonists in the

rest of America that they began to think of following the example of the English colonists in the north. Thus began a movement for independence in the Spanish colonies.

Meantime, a momentous event had happened in Europe : the French Revolution. Pernicious ideas of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" trickled across the Pyrenees. During the turbulent period which followed the French Revolution, a period in which every crowned head in Europe was threatened, the last remnants of Spanish maritime power were shattered by the English in the battles of Cape Finisterre and Trafalgar. This maritime victory meant the end of Spanish colonial power, though not immediately. Napoleon found a Spain so weak that he decided to conquer it, but many surprises awaited him in the Peninsula. Attacked from outside, the Spanish people buried their differences with their rulers and became united in order to oppose him. For the first time in his career of glory, Napoleon found himself faced, not by abject and incompetent rulers, but by a whole people infuriated and with the fatalistic determination which had become a Spanish characteristic.

At first he treated Spain with contempt, and thought it sufficient to send his minor generals against the rebels. Madrid was easily taken. Undaunted, the Spanish people organized itself for guerrilla warfare in the provinces, and, although the Spaniards were beaten in pitched battles, they continued their guerrilla warfare, showing such capacity for it that this popular movement ultimately proved fatal to the power of the greatest general in French history.

It is interesting for us to read now, in view of the recent Civil War, that when fighting against Napoleon's armies the ordinary people of Spain showed a military ability and courage which is incomprehensible to those who do not

know them. A contemporary French general wrote of that guerrilla war : " Women allow themselves to be killed in front of every breach ; every house requires a separate assault."

The ferocity of that Spanish rising carried all before it, but it was lacking in the organizing force which would have given it permanent success. Spaniards show less political ability than military courage. An English expeditionary force under Sir John Moore attempted to relieve Madrid, which was occupied by the French. In this he failed. Another English general, Sir Arthur Wellesley, had better luck, and it is interesting to record that at Badajoz the English were guilty of atrocities not dissimilar from those of which the insurgents of 1936 were guilty. Of the English atrocities it has been written that they were " sad events, deplorable but unavoidable " !

The French were driven out of Spain, and a Liberal reaction followed. A national parliament was established at Cadiz (1811-12), which declared the " Rights of Man," enacted a constitution limiting the royal power, granted suffrage, set up a single Chamber, and abolished the Inquisition. For the first time it looked as if the Spanish people, who had so long suffered from despotic rulers, would achieve a measure of freedom. But the illusion did not last long. When Napoleon fell, another king, Ferdinand VII., was restored to the throne (1814). This monarch swept away the reformers and their constitution, re-established the Inquisition, recalled the Jesuits, imprisoned his enemies, tortured or killed them, and frightened others into exile. In short, he restored the old despotic and absolutest régime in all its glory. At that moment the army was under the control of Liberal-minded officers. It had also become politically minded (and has been so ever since). It

mutinied and demanded a Liberal constitution. The king yielded, and declared himself in favour of advancing along the constitutional path. For a moment it seemed as if a compromise was possible, but from the outside there was a reaction against him. The Emperors of Russia and Austria, and the King of Prussia were terrified lest a Liberal régime in Spain might tell against absolutism everywhere, and a French army was persuaded to cross the Pyrenees and re-establish firmly the monarchical system. Forty thousand constitutionalists were imprisoned; the firing-squad became a commonplace as the sun rose every morning over the cities of Spain. The country was divided into two parties, one headed by Don Carlos, a bigoted zealot for absolutism, and the other by Queen Maria Christina—who indicated that her “Liberalism” was due merely to the fact that she was opposed to power being in the hands of Don Carlos! The queen’s two children were girls, and if Salic law prevailed, Don Carlos would succeed to his brother’s crown. Under the queen’s influence the repeal of Salic law was published and confirmed by Ferdinand VII., and it was this issue which started the series of *pronunciamientos* and the fierce Carlist War, which lasted until 1840. Greater calamities occurred abroad than at home during this very bad reign of Ferdinand. The colonies on the mainland of America were lost—Mexico, Colombia, Peru, and Chile declared their independence, and other colonies followed their example, though all this did not occur without great struggles. Florida was sold to the United States. Canning, the Prime Minister of England, anxious for the disintegration of a great opponent empire, supported the Spanish colonists in their struggle for independence; and the American president, Monroe, ambitiously proclaimed that useful economic instrument the Monroe Doctrine.

So ended the great Spanish Empire.

Spain went out of the business as a controller of territories of immense wealth. The struggle at home had now resolved itself, in outward appearance at all events, into one between *Liberalism* and *Absolutism*. This struggle has continued ever since, and the 1936 Civil War was merely a modern manifestation of it, with certain important qualifications.

cruel. To the Englishman, the bull-fight, the quick execution at dawn by a firing-squad, and the atrocities committed by both sides in the 1936 Civil War are equally appalling. It is a question of difference in temperaments.

Indeed, the character of the Spaniard is a puzzle to most foreigners. Havelock Ellis tells a story in his book *The Soul of Spain* which gives a good indication of the character of the average Spanish peasant. It is as follows. A labourer out of work went to the highroad determined to rob the first person he met. This was a man with a wagon. The labourer bade him halt and demanded his money. "Here are thirty dollars, all that I have," the detained man replied. "There is nothing left for me but robbery, my family are dying of hunger," the aggressor said apologetically, and proceeded to put the money in his pocket. But as he did so his mind changed. "Take this, *chico*," he said, handing back twenty-nine dollars, "one is enough for me." "Would you like anything I have in the cart?" asked the wagoner, impressed by this generosity. "Yes," said the man; "take this dollar back too, I had better have some rice and some beans." The wagoner handed over a bag of eatables, and then held out five dollars, which, however, the labourer refused. "Take them for luck-money," said the wagoner, "I owe you that." And only so was the would-be robber persuaded to accept! This authentic story indicates the mixture of impulses in the Spanish temperament. "We are not unaccustomed," comments Ellis, "to find a veneer of humanity and courtesy over an underlying violence and hardness, but in this temperament *it is the violence and hardness which lie nearer to the surface, and they fall away at once as soon as human relationships are established.*"

No truer words were ever written about Spanish character.



## IV

### THE GROWING PAINS OF LIBERALISM

LET us return for a moment and consider those who were exiled by Ferdinand VII.

One of the disadvantages of exiling political opponents is that they may come into contact with people whose opinions are not dissimilar from their own, and who may be far more advanced politically. The Liberals exiled by Ferdinand from Spain went to France and to England, where they came into contact with more advanced civilizations and more experienced politicians and statesmen. They saw before their eyes better governed peoples, and they could only long to put into practice in their own country such principles of freedom as they witnessed abroad. In Spain itself a bitter struggle proceeded, in which both parties were obdurate, until the end of Ferdinand VII.'s reign in 1832 saw, with the accession of Isabella II., the initiation of a less rigorous régime. This was the period of Borrow's *Bible in Spain*, of Gautier's *Voyage en Espagne*, and of Richard Ford's famous *Handbook*, to which works the reader is referred for picturesque and, on the whole, accurate accounts of the state of the country and people.

At all times there seems to have been political tension, while the life of the average Spaniard continued its haphazard course. There were frequent revolutions, in which either the Army or the Navy, with the Church behind them, played the part of reactionaries and absolutists, and in

between these upheavals the Spanish people attempted *again and again* to assert themselves in order to relieve their lives of the burden of despotism. In the Parliament of 1854 a definitely Republican movement publicly declared itself. It was not widespread, but it grew steadily, and in 1868 it had become important—so important that it was the Radical tendency even amongst the Monarchists. There were two Monarchist parties: those who favoured the accession of the queen's son; and the Carlists. When a constituent Cortes was assembled in 1869, it decided in favour of a Monarchy. So greatly were even the Spanish Monarchists divided in opinion amongst themselves that they could not make up their minds who should be the king, until finally, in 1870, Amadeo of Savoy, the second son of Victor Emmanuel II., was elected. The so-called "reign" of Amadeo lasted until 1873. It was a scandalous episode, a piece of out-and-out jobbery which disgusted the people. On the 12th of February Amadeo laid down his uneasy and thankless crown. This man had never any love for the country of his adoption, nor had he any real friends in Spain. He quitted the country amid the jibes of his former subjects. He had made one profound mistake by threatening to place severe checks on the influence of the clergy. He was probably quite sincere in his desire for Liberal reforms, decentralization, and popular government. But the king of Spain who quarrelled with the Church never lasted long. Amadeo thought that by being king with a parliamentary majority he could introduce certain measures of liberty. However, so far was he removed from the realities of life that he believed that this parliamentary majority represented the feelings of the people, whereas the man in the street could have informed him that the parliamentary majority had been achieved by methods

which guaranteed public misrepresentation in an unusual degree. In the constituent Cortes which followed, Parliament decided (by two hundred and ten votes against two) that Spain should be a Republic, and it almost appeared as if the public were in agreement. The Spanish electoral system was then weak ; even to-day it is far from satisfactory. For the election of the constituent Cortes which voted the first Republic less than a third of the nation had taken part. Catalonia was acting as an independent state ; the northern provinces remained by tradition in the hands of the Carlists, and a new phenomenon was appearing elsewhere : Anarchism. It seems rather curious to us that Spain should be the only country in Europe in which Anarchism should take real root. At first it was essentially a philosophic reaction against despotism on the part of Church and State, and its appeal to the intensely individualist Spaniard was profound. To the Anarchist there is nothing higher than individual liberty ; and nothing worse than any form of coercion. All discipline, all action, must be completely voluntary, he says. It is not hard for us to understand why, after centuries of oppression and exploitation, the average Spanish worker should take to Anarchism as a duck takes to water. This movement, which began about the time of the first Republic, has grown through various vicissitudes until it is to-day a *deciding factor in Spanish politics*. To the Anarchist the State is ever an enemy, even if it should be a benevolent State ; and in Spain the State had always been the symbol of oppression and exploitation. After having voted a Republic, Pi y Margall was elected President. The first item on his programme appealed for union to save the Republic, and insisted upon the necessity for imparting discipline to the politically minded Army. This last threat was a signal of danger to

his opponents, the most forceful of whom were in the Army. But when he went on to propose the *separation of Church and State with free and obligatory education*, his fate was sealed. No man had yet succeeded in cutting the talons of both Army and Church. According to Butler Clarke,\* a conservative British historian, decentralization, local autonomy, and complete freedom for the individual were the aims of the Republican Revolution. Four months only had elapsed since a Government pledged to introduce them had sprung from a fever fit of enthusiasm. During three months the Carlist Rebellion had spread, and the Liberal towns beyond the Ebro were left dependent on their courage and local resources. The army that lined the southern banks of the Ebro, without regular pay, rations, or supplies, was rapidly becoming a ragged and half-starved band of mutineers, incapable of facing the enemy and living as banditti on the districts they were supposed to defend. In Catalonia even worse had befallen. So soon as the Republic was proclaimed, the separatists prepared to proclaim the Independent State of Catalonia. The troops were easily won over to the cause; they showed how readily they had learnt to hate "tyrants" and "oppressors" by shooting their officers and demanding their own discharge. Its land communications cut by the Carlists, the great commercial city was left to defend itself against its "protectors." Whilst the Press and the Ministry were deliberating on the breaking up of Spain into thirteen semi-independent states, Valencia likewise anticipated their decision, raised its *junta*† to supreme authority, declared its port free, established a fiscal frontier, and made preparations to defend its walls against interference by the central authority. Catalonia and Valencia, however, preserved some traditions of local

\* *Modern Spain, 1815-1898.*

† *Junta*, a council or committee.

government, and, thanks to them, never fell into anarchy\* as did Andalusia.

The southern provinces, which had returned to Amadeo's last Parliament seventy Radical-Socialist members, welcomed the advent of the Republic by outbreaks of savage anarchy. The political ideal of the Andalusian demagogues was the Swiss Federation; under the name of *cantonalismo* they preached disintegration to ready ears. Málaga, the centre of the new political creed, as soon as Spain had decided against monarchy, set up a Republic or Canton of its own. It drove out the civil authorities, armed its "volunteers of liberty," disbanded and dismissed its garrison, abolished customs dues and their hated collectors the carbineers, and opened negotiations with Madrid for Federation on a basis of equality. It then gave itself up whole-heartedly to a civil war between the rival Republican leaders, Carvajal and Solier. Seville, Cadiz, and other cities were seized by the same frenzy, its symptoms only differing locally. At Alcoy the mob was ferociously blood-thirsty. At Granada its pranks were ludicrous rather than terrible. The citizens of Seville, led by their *junta*, took possession of the arsenal, armed their walls, and then marched out to impose Federalism upon their neighbours. They had abolished individual property.

Cartagena, one of the most violent, proved also the most stubborn of the revolting cities. The soldiers fraternized with the mob; a deputy and a general, Contreras, led them. The forts and artillery depot fell into their hands, with several hundred cannon. The armour-clad squadron joined them, increasing their power for harm and making them safe from attack on the sea side. Closely watched by British ships of war, the ironclads, manned by undisciplined

\* Butler Clarke uses the word "anarchy" to mean political chaos.

desperadoes, steamed up and down the coast spreading the doctrines of the Revolution, sometimes, as at Alicante, using cannon as the mouthpiece of their propaganda. *In most cities the social movement was marked by bitter hostility to the Church and Army.\** In the country districts, cursed by *latifundia*, absentee landlords, grasping agents, and by the number of holidays enforced by the Church, it was *communistic*; parish assemblies enthusiastically abolished property in law.

In this manner life went on in Spain sixty years ago. Does it not resemble what is happening to-day?

There was political chaos and little social progress of any kind. It remained fundamentally the Spain of Borrow, Gautier, and Ford. There was, however, one bright spot on the horizon during that dreadful period of turmoil. Workers in the big cities, and then agricultural peasants on the countryside, under the tuition of men who were dissatisfied with the body politic and the Church, for the *first time* had begun to show an interest in politics. They were interested because they discovered or believed that only by concerted action they could achieve for themselves that which the rulers would never grant them. The first promptings of extreme Radical education came from the Anarchists, and it is interesting to note that after the Spanish-American War of 1898, in which Spain was forced to give up Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippines, there arose a generation of writers, educators, and progressives who had learnt their political alphabet from the Anarchists. As the last scattered islands of the great empire were being sold by a bankrupt country, and as the last faint sparks of

\* My italics. The statement from Butler Clarke is given to show the intensity of the people's struggle against absolutism; an intensity repeated in the 1936 Civil War.—C. P.

Spanish imperialism disappeared into the fog of history, an entirely new spirit was being born. A cry for liberty arose on all sides.

Men were growing up who realized that never would the Spanish people achieve any sort of political and economic independence and freedom until two great clearances were made: first the absolutist Royal House, and second the money-grubbing and shackling Church of Rome.

In the years that followed several attempts were made to assassinate the new king, Alfonso XIII., a Bourbon, who came to the throne in 1902. The questions which faced the Government were the old, old ones of religion, education, suffrage, land, and regionalism. *These are the five great problems of modern Spain*, and only one of them, suffrage, has been even partially solved.\* In democratic countries such as England, France, or the United States, it is difficult for the average person to believe that in this twentieth century there can still be, amongst the civilized countries of Europe, one in which some sort of reasonable solution has not been found for these not very difficult problems. The reign of Alfonso XIII. proved him to be an astute king, determined at any cost and by any intrigue to maintain the *status quo* of the tandem-mules of Church and State, which governed the country. He also proved himself to be a man of courage on occasions on which he was a target for assassins. In April 1913, when he was fired at three times and escaped unhurt, he behaved in a cool and dignified manner, and then, when he commuted the death sentence on his would-be assassin, these manifestations of very Spanish characteristics won for him considerable popularity.

\* General Franco, the leader of the Fascist rebels in the Civil War of 1936, declared that he would abolish the existing suffrage.—C. P.

## V

## MOROCCO

WITH the reign of Alfonso XIII. the Spanish territory in Morocco had become an all-absorbing question. Antonio Maura, the Prime Minister, was a considerable statesman who endeavoured, entirely without success, to achieve for Spain some of the many reforms that were necessary. Education was almost non-existent, except for the rich and those who were favoured by the Church ; the army was inefficient ; the navy almost a fiction ; justice a sham and a snare ; and the nation had become a shuttlecock in the hands of political parties, tossed between hopeless ineptitude and insatiable greed. The campaign in Morocco, for which blood and treasure was being furnished by the masses of the people, brought home even to the most listless amongst them the fact that they were living under a régime that was cynical, callous, and only concerned with preserving itself in power. But the people were helpless against the power of the Army and the Church. The Great European War hardly touched Spain at all, except that it brought a little prosperity to a country which was able to sell abroad many of its raw materials and much of its agricultural produce. Even this prosperity rarely got beyond parasitic middlemen. Workers and peasants saw little improvement in their lot, although such is the nature of the Spanish worker that *he would be satisfied with less than the worker in almost any other European country.* Traditional rulers of Spain have



always proved themselves to be utterly indifferent to this important fact. Had they at any moment taken into account the fact that if they provided just *a little* butter for the dry bread of the masses, there would hardly be the hatred of a people against the Army and Church which revolted against an elected democratic government in the summer of 1936.

In 1909 in Morocco the Government was building a railway from Melilla into the interior, where industrial concessionaires and capitalists were beginning to exploit the mineral wealth. Riff tribesmen had attacked the soldiers and workmen and drove them away. The Government made the mistake of singling out the discontented and anti-Madrid region of Catalonia to provide military reserves. By this time Catalonia had become the stronghold of a vigorous Anarchist movement; even the moderate Labour movement and the Socialists had become fairly well organized. Barcelona saw no reason why Catalonia should provide men to be shot down in the interests of a group of exploiting capitalists. A general strike was declared. Street fighting began, and Madrid initiated military terrorism. Francisco Ferrer, a philosophic anarchist, and a spokesman on behalf of the oppressed, was accused of high treason and shot. During this period the Catalans showed their appreciation and love of the Roman Catholic Church by murdering priests and burning churches. Those in England who read their newspapers are often a little surprised that in Spain, "the last stronghold of Catholicism," there should be such ill-feeling against so noble and altruistic a religion. English Roman Catholics often refer to the deep piety of their Spanish co-religionists. Here I will make a statement which may surprise Catholics and non-Catholics alike. It is, that the Spaniard is not *at*

heart a pious person. He is still an Iberian, a pagan. He loves ritual and a *fiesta*. He enjoys both with an intensity which is incomprehensible to the foreigner, and this explains the ecstasy which we see at High Mass, in the bull-ring, or, in recent years, even at a Spanish football match ! If the Englishman dearly loves a lord, the Spaniard equally dearly loves a ritual. If there is any fundamental philosophy akin to religion in the mind of the modern Spaniard, it is still a kind of pagan Stoicism. Up to a point the Roman Catholic Church in Spain has taken advantage of this psychological factor, blending it carefully with its own political and materialistic ends. So disgusted are the masses of the people with their Church that, in modern times, they will slaughter its representatives and set fire to its buildings with the same ecstasy and sincerity as they show in worship during better times.

From that period (1909) onwards various governments attempted to solve the problem of Morocco by defeating the protesting natives. In July 1921 the Riffs, a tribe of fine fighters under a brilliant leader, set upon the Spanish army and drove it helter-skelter to the coast. Spanish troops were massacred in thousands. This episode was a veritable débâcle, a *sauve qui peut*. To Spain it was a hideous nightmare, and there was an immediate and violent public outcry for the punishment of those responsible. It is now generally recognized that the villain of the piece was Alfonso XIII., who had interfered with the generals. Governments changed almost from day to day with kaleidoscopic speed.

Such was the situation in September 1923.

It had been decided to inquire, on the 15th, into the Moroccan affair, but three days before that date the Captain-General of Catalonia, Primo de Rivera, decided to make use of the Army in the traditional manner in order to place

himself in power as dictator. He must save Alfonso's face at any cost. His *coup d'état* on the 12th September, however, was achieved without a shot being fired, and this stout, elderly, quite intelligent and humane soldier found himself at the head of affairs in company with Alfonso and the Cardinals. The King became known as Segundo de Rivera. Yet Primo did many good things for Spain ; and many bad ones. He made good roads and improved communications generally. But, in the name of the king, he exercised absolute power. There was no freedom of the Press, no Parliament, no town councils, and no trial by jury. He instituted a régime of military law in which justice was meted out from drumhead courts-martial. All constitutional liberties were abolished. As for the workers' and peasants' organizations, all "revolutionary" movements were violently suppressed and their leaders thrown into prison. Once again Spain groaned under Absolutism. Alas, unhappy Spanish people ! Men of property and men of the Church smiled and devoutly crossed themselves : things were looking a little brighter for them. How good it was to have behind them a strong man and an Army capable at any moment of dealing efficiently with obstreperous workmen who might demand reasonable wages, or agricultural labourers who might harbour an ambition for a diet a little better and a little more varied than boiled acorns.

And so it went on, in the old, old traditional manner : a suppressed people and a reactionary Government in power.

## VI

### THE END OF THE MONARCHY

At last Primo de Rivera went the way of all flesh, and a hotchpotch régime followed him. A dictatorship, as a witty Spaniard remarked at the time, is like a bicycle going at full speed : so long as it goes fast it keeps its balance, but when it slows down it topples and falls. In some strange way the administration of the country muddled along until the spring of 1931, when it was decided to hold municipal elections for the purpose of reconstituting Local Councils on a "democratic basis." *The decision to hold those elections proved to be the most profound mistake ever made by an absolutist régime in Spain.* To the amazement of the outside world (but not in the least to the amazement of those with their ears to the ground) the results of the municipal elections in the principal cities (though not in the country districts, where the people were still under the heels of *cacique* and priest) showed an overwhelming majority in favour of Republicanism and against the now hated Alfonso. There was only one thing for him to do : GO. He slipped abjectly out of Madrid by night, and his exit from Spain was graciously helped by those who now walked into power.

A second Spanish Republic was established amidst a popular enthusiasm which knew no bounds. English listeners may remember the dramatic broadcast of it.

All Spain turned itself into a *fiesta* of rejoicing. Liberty had at last arrived !

Even the Republicans, Socialists and other Left Wing people were astounded at the furious outburst of feeling against the monarchy and absolutism.

A provisional Government of the Republic was formed. There were three Moderate Socialists in it, and the remainder of the Cabinet consisted of Moderate Republicans and Liberalish representatives of the comfortable middle-class. Señor Alcalá Zamora in due course became President. He was, it should be noted, a devout Catholic and an owner of considerable property. Realists, therefore, knew that little was to be expected of him. The first work of the new Government was to draw up a Constitution, which was promulgated on 9th September 1931. It is an interesting Constitution which, in its wording and sentiments, is inspiring. In the main it follows the Mexican Constitution of 1917 and the German Weimar Constitution of 1919. It was composed by excellent jurists with Liberal-Democratic views. Article 1 reads as follows :

*Spain is a Democratic Republic of Workers organized in a régime of Justice and Liberty.*

Amongst proposed reforms it provided that religious organizations should be considered as "Associations governed by a special law." The Catholic Church was to be separated from the State ; the hated Jesuits were dissolved and prohibited. Religious orders were forbidden to engage in business or teaching. Property was expropriated where necessary for social utility, with provision for compensation. Single Chamber government on democratic lines was to be formed on a basis of general suffrage. Certain clauses pro-

vided for the abolition of feudalism: a very important law of Agrarian Reform was drawn up, which, if put into practice, would have partitioned the great estates amongst the peasants. *Latifundia*\* was to be ended at last! In addition to the Constitution a special Statute was evolved to provide for self-government in Catalonia.

Most of the great industrialists accepted the Republic, and decided to work under it. But two great forces which remained—the Church and the big landowners—hated the Liberal Republic and never accepted it. For a time Monarchists remained quiet, because of overwhelming public opinion against them. Then, little by little, they began to creep out of their hiding-places, talk in the cafés, and make little public utterances here and there against the Republic. Anti-Catholic feeling was so strong that in many parts of the country mobs collected for the sole purpose of burning churches and destroying the convents: these were essentially spontaneous demonstrations of the people, and were never organized by any Left Party. The Government disapproved of them, and the Socialist Party went so far as to organize guards and defences against furious incendiaries.

The Second Republic never at any moment sat comfortably in the saddle. The extreme measures which were provided for in the Constitution frightened the middle-classes, amongst whom still existed a quasi-feudal mentality. The cry went out that the Republican Government were going too far, and wrecking "the basis of life" as it was understood by the Church and comfortable bourgeoisie. It was during this period that Don Miguel Azaña came into prominence. Before that he had been a comparatively

\* *Latifundia*, the system of great landed estates (mostly run by absentee landlords).—C. P.

obscure man, who was better known as a writer than as a politician. But this stout little fellow—"Miguelito" they call him—whose greatest distinction hitherto had been because of writings and his excellent translation of George Borrow's *Bible in Spain*, soon showed that he was a man of inflexible character and considerable political wisdom. At heart he is (and always has been) a *Democratic Republican*, and by no means a Left Wing extremist. Indeed, he dislikes both Communism and Socialism. The first signs of revolt against the Democratic Republic appeared in September 1932, when a part of the Army, led by members of the old aristocracy and their sympathizers, came out in open rebellion. This movement was quickly suppressed. Meanwhile, the Church had found in Gil Robles a staunch supporter who came forward with an *essentially Fascist programme*. So strong was the feeling against the Monarchy that Robles did not dare to include a restoration amongst his proposals. One of his first announcements was to the effect that the Roman Catholic Church would not obey that part of the Constitution which threatened to reduce it to the position of a non-political and non-property owning body. At all costs the material side of the Church must be preserved. The spiritual mission—well, it must take care of itself!

It was decided to hold a general election in 1933. By this time industrialists, landowners, Church, monarchists, and all those of the frightened middle-classes who feared the "Bolshevism" of the democratic Republic, banded themselves together in a political party for the purpose of voting against every candidate who might show the slightest democratic tendencies. During the election campaign this extreme Right organization (C.E.D.A.) spent millions of pesetas on behalf of the traditionalists whose power and

property were threatened by the infant Republic. Gil Robles and his supporters did not forget that in the historic Municipal Elections of 1931 the priest-ridden country districts had voted fairly solidly for the old régime. In those illiterate country districts the Church and the *caciques* still wielded most of their old power. It was only necessary to suborn electors and coerce ignorant Catholic voters with threats of hell-fire in order to make the country districts vote again in favour of traditionalism. The Republican Government was unjustifiably confident of its ability to attract the votes of those illiterate and terrified outlying electors. The result was what intelligent observers expected: the reactionaries re-won much of the power which they had lost. Counter-revolution had begun. The official organ of the Catholic Church was perfectly honest in its declaration of the policy of those who had re-won power on its behalf. It said that a new state must be created which would necessitate the imposition of sacrifices and duties. "*What matter if this end necessitates the shedding of blood?*" said *El Debate*, "*we need an integral power and that is what we seek. . . . Democracy is not for us an end. . . . When the moment comes parliament will either submit or we shall wipe it out.*"

Surely that is plain enough !

Clericalism once more raised its political head. Once more it might proceed, as in the past, to be moneylender for the countryside. Once more nearly three million peasant small-holders would come completely under the control of Catholic usurers. Once more, because of this extraordinary money power, the municipalities would be "conditioned" by the Church. The Procurator of the Society of Jesus could once more safely take his place on thirty-six Boards of Directors of banks, mines, electrical and transport undertakings, and so forth. What mattered



the trifling sum of two hundred million pesetas of Jesuit wealth which had been seized by the Republic ! It was a mere bagatelle, not even a fifth of what the Church thought it desirable to spend on propaganda, bribery, and subornation during the election : and even this had been a sprat to catch a mackerel. By 1934 large numbers of peasants and workers realized what they had done to re-create for themselves an intensified form of the old slavery. Wages had everywhere fallen by anything from forty to sixty per cent., and the condition of the masses was even worse than it had been before the Republic. Popular revolution broke out, and showed itself in a most intense form in the mining province of Asturias in the month of October. The new reactionary Government had behind it an Army which had not yet been fully cleansed of clerical-landowner-aristocratic influence, and this Army played its traditional part against the unfortunate wretches who had been largely responsible for reinstituting the reactionary influence, and whose only cry now was : " Bread ! " The Christian Governors at Madrid brought from Morocco large numbers of African troops and Foreign Legionaries to shoot down the Spanish miners in Asturias. In that province the people put up a heroic struggle against overwhelming odds. The revolution was suppressed, but not before the miners suffered nearly five thousand casualties in killed and wounded. So ruthless was the Government against its own countrymen on that occasion that the Spanish people has been unable to forget or forgive. It would have been bad enough if only Spanish troops had been employed. To import infidel Moors and a collection of adventurers and rascals of the Foreign Legion was an indignity which Spanish pride could not tolerate. It was felt to be an affront to the whole people. Sympathy swung away from the reactionary Government,

and a period of the gravest unrest began all over Spain. The masses realized more fully than they had ever done in their history that in some way they must become united for a struggle with the self-declared Fascist reactionaries who were gaining more power daily. It was not a time for hair-splitting over questions of political doctrine. Those who were *against* Fascism and clericalism and *Latifundia* must get together, sink their differences, and do their best to fight the common enemy.

That was the origin of the Popular Front in Spain. Its spiritual origin dates from the revolt of the Asturian miners and its brutal suppression in 1934.

The year 1935 was a year in which the feeling grew. Parliament became useless, and a general election was decided upon for 1936.

Events had begun to move swiftly.

## VII

### THE PEASANTRY

It can hardly be difficult, even for a foreigner, to realize from what has gone before why modern Spain should be in a state of permanent social unrest. There is still a strong element of deep-rooted feudalism, and at every street corner and on every landscape can be seen or felt the influence of the Roman Catholic Church. There was less recovery from the world financial and economic crisis than in any other European country. Industrial output had fallen ; methods of production and distribution are still almost mediæval by German, English, or American standards. About twenty thousand landowners, together with the Church, own approximately four-fifths of the land, and during the three years 1933-35 the Right Wing Government cancelled on a wholesale scale collective agreements by which industrial wages and those of the peasants had been almost doubled. It should be noted that the average daily wage of an industrial worker in the towns, before those collective agreements and after their cancellation, was not more than about four pesetas or less than two shillings ; and agricultural wages were even lower.

Before the fall of the monarchy in 1931 there had been tens of thousands of peasants who were permitted by the landowners to cultivate a very small piece of land ; by the end of 1934 the Right Government had *driven them off*,

without attempting to provide any other means of subsistence. It was as a direct result of this intense economic pressure upon the poorest people throughout Spain—the lesser industrial workers, miners, and agricultural labourers—that the attempt was made in October 1934 in the province of Asturias to rise against landowners, mineowners, and employers of labour. The Asturian miners fought bravely, but they were quite unable to withstand the onslaughts of trained mercenary troops and adventurers, who showed their zeal for their paymasters by running amok on every possible occasion. Punitive expeditions were sent against a poor peasantry desperate by famine and oppression. The new traditionalist masters of Spain were proving themselves to be many times worse than their predecessors in the past, who, cynical as they were, had not hired foreign coloured troops and rascals to butcher the people.

The constitution of the Spanish Army seems to have been specially planned to deal with internal uprisings, for in Spain there is one officer for every ten other ranks, compared with one officer for every twenty other ranks in the French Army. And the Spanish officers have been a caste representing the interests of traditionalism. After the fall of the monarchy an attempt was made to cleanse the Army of reactionary elements, but in a country in which the Army has been the traditional home for influential members of the landowning aristocracy this proved to be impossible. Furthermore, this body of officers had long been politically minded: for a century the country suffered from one military *coup d'état* after another, resulting in reactionary dictatorships of the most ignorant and oppressive nature. In every one of these *pronunciamientos* there was always in the background the wealthy and belligerent Church, that great rack-renting, tenant-driving, and money-grubbing

and money-lending institution, ever ready to support the side which guaranteed its perpetuation.

We have already seen that the mixture of races and the physical divisions by mountains and rivers created within Spain itself frontiers separating one region from another, and thus working against collective unity. Almost from time immemorial the Catalans and Basques, to mention only two races within Spain, have insisted upon their distinction from the rest of the country. In recent years other districts clamoured for autonomy: Galicia, for example. Hence, it has been almost impossible to make the inhabitants of different parts of the country see eye to eye with one another. The 1936 Civil War was the outcome in the first instance of purely economic factors. On the one hand it was an attempt by landowners and Church to re-capture their fast-diminishing rights under a democratic government; and on the other it was an attempt by the democratic government to fight on the broad issue of *fair distribution of property and a reasonable existence for the poorest classes in the community*.

Of these poor classes by far the most important are the agricultural labourers, who make up nearly sixty per cent. of the employed section of the population. It should not be forgotten that there are great areas in Spain in which the soil is of a north African aridity and with an infinitesimal rainfall. The Moors had established a fine irrigation system which rendered Spain at least equal to any other European country in agricultural production. When the Moors went, the rulers were either too lazy or too inefficient or too short-sighted, or, what is still more likely, far too busy with the robbery and exploitation of the Americas, to think about the unfortunate peasantry at home. In one district we find an abundance of water, sometimes more than is required

for any agricultural purposes ; in another there is scarcity which year after year reduces the wretched inhabitants to a state of utter despair. In 1935 the present writer wandered on foot across cultivated areas in Andalucia, and made a point of speaking to labourers working on the farms. In nearly every case when the poor peasant could be induced to speak about his life and the condition thereof, the inevitable reply would be : " It is misery. We have no money and very little food. God knows how we shall live through the winter." And there would be a fatalistic shrugging of the shoulders—sometimes accompanied by a significant flashing of eyes.

The peasantry of Spain have had no inducement to introduce scientific farming, and as for irrigation systems, these are entirely outside their ken and scope, and would have to be introduced by Government. One remembers the state of Ireland before that interesting period in history in which the Irish peasant farmer decided that the best thing to do with a landlord was to shoot him ! The Spanish peasant has been far more long-suffering. In Spain every tenancy is a short one, and any improvement made by the tenant becomes the legal property of the landowner on the expiration of the lease, and without any obligation on the landlord's part to compensate the person who has improved the land and made it more valuable. Latifundia, the system of great landed estates, was one of the evils which the Republic promised to abolish and indeed began to abolish. A movement was made to this end in the Law of Agrarian Reform which was first introduced in 1932. But, as we have seen, the reactionary Right Government of 1934 stepped in and very successfully held up every attempt at progress. Once again the boastful absentee landlord showed himself in his finery in the fashionable

cafés of Madrid and elsewhere : once again the peasant worker was reduced to subsistence upon acorns.

Some ninety-five per cent. of agricultural undertakings consist of about five million hectares and thirty-five per cent. consist of nine million hectares. Half a million farms consist of one hectare or less, and nearly three million hectares are divided amongst about one thousand five hundred farmers. In the south of Spain about sixty per cent. of each province consists of great landed estates.\* Perhaps the worst feature of the whole system is the existence of those villainous *caciques* or managers employed by absentee landlords to look after the estate. These *caciques* take upon themselves almost unlimited powers over the small tenant farmers. They become political bosses. They influence tenants in voting. They drive them to Church, they collect from them quite illegal dues and they impose miscellaneous quite illegal fines. Take, for instance, the case of a peasant who has a small piece of land and a donkey turned out to graze on it. If the donkey should happen to make its way through a fence and steal a feed of grass from the neighbouring peasant's land, and if this heinous crime should come to the attention of the *cacique*, then *both* the owner of the donkey *and* of the stolen feed of grass would be mulcted in a fine : the former for permitting his ass to stray on to a neighbour's land, or for not repairing the fence, the neighbour for not driving the donkey back and either repairing the fence or making the person responsible do so.

This is an authentic example of the state of oppression to which the Spanish peasant in many parts of the country has been reduced. Not a week passes that a peasant does

\* See that excellent little book, *Spain To-day* (1936), by Edouard Conze ; and also *Spain To-day*, by F. B. Deakin (1923).

not out of his seven or eight shillings of weekly earnings have to pay to the *cacique* some ridiculous and utterly cruel fine. Is it to be wondered that the countryside in many places, but particularly in Andalucia, has been seething with discontent in recent years ?

Only in pre-Soviet Russia was there in Europe a state of affairs similar to those actually existing in Spain in the year 1936.

Let us now return to the political situation at the beginning of that year.



## VIII

### POLITICS IN 1936

ON 7th January 1936 the long-promised dissolution of the Cortes was announced and a General Election called for 16th February, with a second voting on 1st March to clear up doubtful cases. The first sitting of the newly-elected Parliament was announced for 16th March.

The reasons for the dissolution were given in the Preamble to a legislative Decree. Since the election of 1933, it stated, Parliament had been sterile because of its composition, and neither by-elections nor municipal elections since that date had given any idea of the trend of public opinion. From the first election under the Republic in 1931, opinion and legislation until 1933 had moved steadily in one direction; since 1933 it had moved in a contrary sense. The oscillation made it necessary for the people to be given an opportunity of expressing its will.

This decision was welcomed with enthusiasm by the democratic parties and the general public, as everybody felt that to continue the sessions of Cortes in the circumstances which had prevailed would be little less than farcical.\*

On the following morning the censorship was raised, much to the relief of editors. Some of them announced that, having so much to say, they were at a loss where to

\* For a more detailed statement of the facts in this section see *Report on Foreign Affairs* (Empire Parliamentary Association, London, 1936).

begin. *El Sol* said that although a censorship might prevent publication, it could not prevent thought, and that the most it did was to drive expression into clandestine methods which were prejudicial to the very ends it attempted to defend.

Had the Press been at liberty to denounce the abuses and scandals of recent years, Spain might not have reached her present calamitous state. Newspapers immediately began to publish extracts from speeches which had been censored. With the dissolution of the Cortes, parliamentary immunity disappeared, and the abolition of censorship left speakers to act on their own responsibility during the election period. The Prime Minister announced to the Press that the chief task of the Government during the election would be to preserve an attitude of neutrality, in order that the public might be able to give free expression at the polls to its wishes.

On 16th January all the Left Parties, with the exception of the small group of National Republicans, decided to work together on a joint popular programme. On this the Communists, Syndicalists, Left Republicans, Socialists, and the Republican Union had agreed, and they issued a manifesto of which the following is the gist.

There should be a General Amnesty for all political prisoners charged since the election of 1933. Civil servants who had been disturbed in their employment because of their political opinions should be reinstated, and the same should apply to municipal employees. Victims of the 1934 revolution should receive reparation. A constitutional régime should be established, the Law of Constitutional Guarantees should be reformed, and provincial and other legislation should be revised in accordance with the constitution. Authority should be maintained with due regard

for the liberty of the individual. The whole system of justice and prisons should be revised and reorganized. As regards agriculture, measures should be introduced to enable workers to obtain the benefits to which they are entitled—by the elimination of middlemen, by credits, reduction of interest charges, development, education, reform of land laws, and especially by repeal of the law which had returned land to the nobility, and thus perpetuated *latifundia*. There should be assistance for industry by reorganizing tariffs and excise duties, by rationalization and reduction of interest charges, by the creation of bodies to work for the mutual benefit of the State and the workers, and by a programme of public works and assistance to small undertakings. All finance and banking must be placed at the service of national reconstruction, but credit must not be ruined by compulsory measures. The banking system must be reformed, though not nationalized; and the Bank of Spain must be prevented from competing with the private banks. Taxation should be overhauled with the object of making it more equitable. Financial administration generally should be improved in the national interest. In general social matters the Republic must be “*a régime of democratic ideals and liberty*,” and no sacrifice should be spared to raise the moral and social conditions of the mass of the people. Minimum wages should be fixed for certain workers who were suffering unduly; machinery must be created to deal with unemployment. Charities should be administered by the State. Education must be developed with the enthusiasm shown in the first days of the Republic, and all private education must be controlled. All autonomous measures of legislation should be restored. International policy should be directed in support of the principles of the League of Nations.

This manifesto, which represented the appeal and policy of the Left, was signed by Largo Caballero, of the General Workers Union, and Juan Andrade, of the Marxist Workers, as well as by the leaders of the moderate Republicans. It was even signed by Angel Pestaña of the Syndicalists—the first time a Syndicalist leader had joined with the moderates. Thus a “Popular Front” came into being.

The document is of great interest for several reasons. In the first place, it represented astounding compromises for Spaniards—compromises which seemed to be impossible of achievement. Secondly, it was very moderate in tone. Thirdly, it voiced the claims of a vast number of people. Fourthly, it was by no means quixotic or impracticable—as most election manifestoes are, especially in Spain. From the moment it appeared, observers felt that the Left Wing had scored a triumph, and that they would gain widespread sympathy because of their moderation.

As against this unexpectedly moderate and reasonable programme, the Right Wing groups offered little that was convincing. They were not so definite, and the public fully realized that such compromises as might be made would be on minor questions and could not represent so sincere an effort as had been made by the Left. The latter appealed for a democratic and progressive Republic. The former (C.E.D.A. [Fascists], Monarchists, Traditionalists, Agrarians, Radicals, Conservative Republicans, Centrists, National Bloc, and Renovación española) was a coalition representing for the most part those ideas and ideals which the Republic had been established to abolish. Nothing but a common danger could have brought together so many differing units on either side: the one representing conservative tradition, the other the modern spirit of a large body of electors. The Election was to be, clearly, a straight-

forward struggle between Right and Left, and the Left had produced a manifesto of considerable direct appeal. The Right leader was Señor José María Gil Robles, Fascist ; Don Miguel de Azaña, Republican Left Liberal, was the moving spirit of the democratic Left, though Largo Caballero was an almost equally popular figure.

In 1933 the Spanish electorate had numbered more than thirteen millions, of whom more than half were women. Now it was slightly larger. In 1933 many women voted, and it is estimated that more of them took advantage of the franchise in 1936. There were 987 candidates for 473 seats, the chief groups being, approximately, as follows :

C.E.D.A. . . . .	190
Fascists . . . . .	40
Monarchists . . . . .	85
Centre . . . . .	105
Socialists . . . . .	120
Radicals . . . . .	70
Communists . . . . .	20

Each Province provides one deputy per 50,000 inhabitants ; every town of more than 140,000 inhabitants is a separate constituency. The voting age is 23, and the system is a variant of the French system. A second ballot is held to decide doubtful cases.

On 16th February the General Election took place without any serious disturbance, notwithstanding the tense atmosphere which prevailed everywhere in view of the serious issues at stake. The results were as follows :

*Left :* Socialists, 85 ; Republican, Left, 75 ; Republican Union, 32 ; Catalan Esquerra, 20 ; Communists, 14 ; Various, 30.  
Total, 256.

<i>Centre</i> :	Portelistas, 19 ; Catalan Lliga, 11 ; Radicals, 8 ; Progressists, 6 ; Various, 11.
	Total, 55.
<i>Right</i> :	C.E.D.A., 94 ; Agrarians, 12 ; Monarchists, 12 ; Independents, 11 ; Traditionalists, 11 ; Various, 3.
	Total, 143.

The C.E.D.A. with 94 Deputies (led by Gil Robles) was the strongest single unit in the new House ; the Socialists came next with 85. There were 14 Communists and 23 Monarchists. Twenty second ballots (results not yet announced) were necessary. "A.B.C." (Conservative clerical newspaper) estimated the voting to be : Right, 4,570,000 ; Left, 4,356,000.

Conservative organs considered that for the Left to have 256 Deputies and the Right 197 on such a vote meant that the new Parliament could hardly be said to represent the country. But the fact remained that the Left had scored a notable victory, based no doubt upon their moderate manifesto. *They gained power strictly in accordance with the Electoral Laws and the Constitution.*

Señor Lerroux, the veteran Radical chief, was defeated. Gil Robles failed to be returned in Madrid, his stronghold, but was elected for Salamanca. Señor Azaña was top of the poll in Madrid. In Catalonia the Left had a notable success. The Left also won in the south (Cadiz, Seville, Málaga, etc.), in Asturias, Aragon, Zaragoza, Bilbao, Valencia, and Murcia. In Castile, Murcia, Navarra, Tenerife, and the Balearics the Right succeeded.

Señor Portela Valladares, the Premier, resigned on the 19th February, and Señor Azaña proceeded to form a Cabinet.

On the same day Señor Azaña's new Government was announced as follows :

Premier . . . . .	D. Manuel Azaña (Republican Left).
Minister of Justice . . .	D. Antonio Lara (Republican Union).
Minister of State . . .	D. Augusto Barcia (Republican Left).
Minister of War . . .	General Masquelet (Republican Left).
Minister of Marine . . .	D. José Giralt (Republican Left).
Minister of Interior . . .	D. Amos Salvador (Republican Left).
Minister of Finance . . .	D. Gabriel Franco (Republican Left).
Minister of Instruction .	D. Marcelino Domingo (Republican Left).
Minister of Public Works . . . . .	D. Santiago Casares Quiroga (Republican Left).
Minister of Labour . . .	D. Enrique Ramos (Republican Left).
Minister of Commerce and Industry . . .	D. Alvarez Buylla (Republican Left).
Minister of Agriculture	D. Mariano Ruiz Funes (Republican Left).
Minister of Communi- cations . . . . .	D. Manuel Blasco Garzón (Republican Union).

This Government is mentioned in full to show that it consisted of men who were in no sense extremists. The announcement of their names pleased the public. Señor Largo Caballero declared his intention of remaining loyal to the programme of the election manifesto and to the Government. The general impression was that at last Spain had found a sound Ministry, and one which might last for a considerable time. The first action of the Cabinet was to announce that 30,000 political prisoners would be freed ; in a few days this was done.

The first meeting of the new Cabinet was held on 20th February, and afterwards the Señor Azaña gave a brief broadcast address, in which he promised that the electoral programme would be fulfilled. The Cortes would immediately begin national reconstruction, but there must be

no disturbances, for these neither he nor his colleagues would tolerate. The Ministry had no feelings of recrimination and were not working in a spirit of persecution. Their watchword would be "Defence of the Republic, restoration of the Republic, prosperity and defence of Spain."

In a Press interview Señor Azaña said that the principal policy of the Government would be to apply the Constitution and hasten the fulfilment of the electoral programme. He would have the support of the Socialists. The results of the election showed Spain to be republican, and that almost anything might happen except a restoration of the monarchy. The country had developed a *political consciousness* and was awake, everybody being interested and anxious to help. Spain was determined to co-operate and help in the maintenance of world peace through the League of Nations. Relations with Portugal would be strengthened.

In no part of Spain was the electoral victory more clearly expressed than in Catalonia. One of the Premier's first acts was to send to the prison where Señor Companys, ex-President of Catalonia, was confined, and to arrange for his liberation. On 25th February a Decree-law was drawn up, approved by the Cabinet and President and, after a slight delay, approved by the Permanent Committee of Cortes, to annul a law of January 1935, which had suspended the Catalan Statute. This indicated an almost immediate return of Catalonia to Home Rule, with Señor Companys reinstated as President of the *Generalitat*.

Supplementary elections were held on 1st March and, as a result, the Cortes was finally constituted as follows :

Parties of the Left . . . .	266 Representatives
Parties of the Right . . . .	142 Representatives
Parties of the Centre . . . .	65 Representatives
Total Deputies . . . .	473



On 16th March the third Cortes since the establishment of the Republic was opened, and the first business was the election of Señor Martínez Barrio, leader of the Republican Union, as Speaker. A "State of Alarm" was then proclaimed for a further period, owing to the grave unrest which prevailed in many parts of Spain. The House gave itself over to a consideration of measures necessary for the restoration of law and order, and Señor Azaña repeated that the Government would not neglect to do its duty in this respect. In the face of a clamour from the Left, a Decree was passed outlawing the Fascist organization. The suppression of this organization, and the arrest of many of its members and leaders, occupied the attention of the public during the weeks which followed.

On 15th April the Prime Minister, speaking in the Cortes, outlined the grave position in which the country found itself, and he stated the problems which had to be faced. The financial position was unsatisfactory—so much so that a monetary crisis had arisen. The unemployment problem had to be faced; both involved a campaign of Government economy. Spain would co-operate with the ideal represented by the League of Nations in international affairs. As regards the problem of internal disorder, it was the duty of the Government to uphold authority, and at all costs to defend the Republic.

Señor Calvo Sotelo, the clever Monarchist Leader, read a list of the disturbances which had taken place since the new Government had come into office. He warned the Cabinet of the progress of "Red" propaganda amongst the armed forces, and ended by declaring that the answer to a Dictatorship of the Proletariat might be a "counter-attack to set up a totalitarian State." This was an open threat of Fascism.

A few days later an active campaign was initiated for the restoration of order. In all parts of Spain the police set to work to track down and arrest Fascists. A Bill was passed threatening those officers who had resigned from the Army since 1931 with the withdrawal of the privileges granted to them should they be found engaging in conspiracy against the State, or belonging to associations declared to be illegal. A Bill to revise the Land Reform Act was also tabled.

After the formation of the Azaña Government the President, Señor Alcalá Zamora, began to find his position difficult. He was the friend of neither the Right nor Left, and had striven throughout his period of office for the formation of a strong Centre Party. The elections had shattered all his hopes in this respect, and the Left Parties demanded his resignation for having cynically dissolved the previous Cortes at a moment which he deemed most favourable to the furtherance of his own policy. On 7th April a joint Socialist-Communist motion was passed with an overwhelming majority to censure his action on that occasion.

On the same evening Señor Martinez Barrio was appointed provisional President, and the following morning took possession of his office at the National Palace. By the Constitution, convocations for a presidential election were issued within the following thirty days. (The President is elected by a number of "Compromisarios" corresponding to the number of Deputies in the Cortes.)

Few presidents have had a more difficult task than Alcalá Zamora. When first he took office in 1931 divisions in the Republican ranks had become apparent. As a Catholic, he objected strongly to those sections of the Constitution which had been devised to curtail the power of the Church ;

he particularly objected to the expulsion of the Jesuits. In 1933 he held up for some time the Bill dissolving the religious orders and, in the same year, he had withdrawn his confidence from the Premier, Señor Azaña, despite the fact that the latter had just received a very satisfactory vote of confidence in the Cortes. The C.E.D.A. Party of Gil Robles next provided him with a difficult problem : he had either to dissolve Parliament or admit this clerical Party to power ; but he was warned by the Left that the admission of a disloyal Party would be regarded as treason. The revolt in Asturias, with its heavy toll of casualties, a severe loss of property and repercussions in many parts of Spain followed. When Señor Lerroux succeeded in stamping out that revolt, and evidence was forthcoming of the brutally extreme measures used to this end, the President had turned a deaf ear to all such reports. In January 1935 he had spoken in the Cortes concerning the necessity for a fundamental reform of the Constitution, and this, coming from a man who had sworn his allegiance to the Constitution, attracted much criticism. In the recent elections, members of all Parties proclaimed that the Catholic reactionary Alcalá Zamora must go, and, when the new Cabinet was formed, his relations with it became impossible.

It was soon clear that the election of a new President would not be an easy matter. In the first place, it was difficult to find a man whose political opinions would be tolerable and who, at the same time, would have the wisdom to hold the political balance, and, in a sense, replace a Second Chamber.

On 26th April the 473 *Compromisarios* were elected to co-operate with Members of Parliament in the election of a new President. The results were as follows : Left 372

and other Parties, 90. On 10th May, the resulting electors appointed Señor Azaña as Head of the State.

During the whole of this period the most noteworthy feature of the political situation (in almost all parts of Spain) was the growth in power of the Left Wing. This was demonstrated by the well-organized activities that were calculated to gain further power for the Left. The action of the Government in outlawing the Fascists was in itself a signal that the Government were sympathetic to the Left.

The secretary of the Communist Party announced that the Azaña Government could only be regarded as Left-Republican, and did not adequately represent the interests of the workers and peasants who formed the bulk of the population. The pact which served as an election platform, he said, was inadequate, and apart from the amnesty and the reinstatement of victimized workers, this pact did not contain any real solution of the main questions of democratic revolution. Expressing the opinion of Communists, he admitted that the pact might for the moment alleviate the hard lot of workers and peasants, but, above all, it might create a situation from which a revolutionary Government might evolve. He, therefore, advised his followers to support the Government, so long as they carried out the pact, and he advocated the continued existence of the People's Front. "We have," he said, "a long road to travel in the company of the Left Republicans."

In the second week of April a number of Communists returned from Russia to Spain, and were given an official welcome in the Town Hall of Madrid. In response to appeals, some 5,000 motor cars met them at the railway station, and they were accompanied by immense crowds of people carrying red flags and banners showing the hammer and sickle. What most surprised foreign observers

was that at least thirty per cent. of the crowds consisted of women, who, in Spain, are supposed to be staunch Catholics and Conservatives ! The demonstration was well staged throughout, and such was the moderation and discipline of the blue-shirted Communists that supporters of the Right viewed it with grave misgivings for the future.

Perhaps the most striking demonstration of the rise of the Left occurred in the province of Badajoz, where 60,000 agricultural workers, under the leadership of Communist deputies, to all intents and purposes took possession of the whole province. They confiscated the big estates and proceeded to partition the land amongst themselves. Their leaders demanded of the Government that the settlers be provided with the wherewithal to cultivate the land.

In other parts of Spain there were similar movements. These activities caused the Government to amend or eliminate those sections of the Land Law of 1935, which were objectionable to the Left. In seven provinces where agricultural distress was most acute steps were taken to settle peasant workers on the land ; these settlers had hitherto been accustomed to hire themselves for a meagre wage to landowners. In many parts of Spain the peasantry appropriated and began to cultivate land in anticipation of legal formalities.

In Catalonia the power of the Left was also demonstrated. The return of Señor Companys, the Catalan President, was a signal for many proclamations of local independence. The President himself announced that he stood by "the Catalan State of the Spanish Federal Republic." On 26th March the local *Corts* was reopened, after having been suspended for seventeen months. Parliament then proceeded to nullify all laws unpalatable to Catalonia which had been passed during this period. In

short, autonomy was fully restored, and even the dispossessed municipal councils were re-established. Indeed, at no time was the independence of the province more clearly announced, and, for the moment, the Government at Madrid was unable to interfere with this strong tide of events.

The election of Señor Azaña to the Presidency removed from the active political arena the only man who seemed capable of maintaining power against the increase of the Left Wing. The leader of the Extreme Left, Señor Largo Caballero, was now almost without effective opposition, and he held the key to the future.

The situation so created caused what almost amounted to a panic amongst those sections of the population which hold the greater part of the land and wealth of Spain. Already in some parts of the country there were rumours of attempts in the near future to form a Soviet system of government, and the Confederation of Labour decided, in the first week of May, that the moment had come when an attempt should be made to establish Soviets. Many experienced observers were of opinion that the establishment of Marxian Communism in Spain was not yet possible because of the intense individualism of the Spaniard. The same people believed, before 1930, that the Monarchy was firmly established, and they were surprised when it was swept away overnight. Few people could have foreseen the growth of an anti-Catholic movement so strong that it resulted in the burning and pillaging of hundreds of churches.

The stage was set for a struggle between Republican constitutionalism and a well-organized and impassioned drive from the Left to establish a new form of government.

Against both were Right forces—not yet ready.

## IX

### EVENTS BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR

THE election of Señor Azaña to the Presidency was followed by many misgivings on the part not only of his supporters, but of a wider public with the interests of law and order at heart.

It was feared that, as a Liberal-Republican, he would be unable to hold the balance between the Extreme Right and the strong and over-growing Left. Even more serious was the problem of finding a man strong enough to take his place at the head of a Cabinet, when the country most needed a strong man in the Cortes. Many people felt that Señor Azaña's abandonment of active politics in a moment of crisis represented his belief in the impossibility of establishing a democratic régime, and this because of the fact that, in recent months, his following had consisted chiefly of Socialists and others whose views were more revolutionary than his own. The public enthusiasm manifested when his election was known was more Marxist than Liberal.

Señor Barcia, the Foreign Minister, was appointed to be acting-Premier pending the re-formation of the Cabinet. He was followed by Señor Casares Quiroga who, on 13th May, announced a new democratic Republican ministry.

The first decision of the new Cabinet was to prolong the "State of Alarm," modifying it only in regard to censorship: verbatim reports of proceedings in the Cortes might

be published, and information would be given to the public in regard to completely censored passages in newspapers.

On 19th May the new Prime Minister informed the Cortes that the Cabinet would continue to put into practice the programme of the Popular Front as announced before the election. The Government would proceed with the greatest possible speed to fulfil their promises to the masses of the people, especially in regard to the two very pressing problems of unemployment and agrarian reform. Fascists would be made to obey the law ; enemies of the Republic would be suppressed. In reply to this, the Opposition Leader, Gil Robles, warned the Government that their Left supporters were merely awaiting a suitable opportunity for attack, which would overthrow both the Government and the Republic. There were signs that the Right Wing Parties did not intend to remain inactive in the face of the growth and co-ordination of Left Wing Parties.

The Right consisted of Monarchists, Agrarians, Traditionalists, C.E.D.A. (Gil Robles and Catholic Right), the followers of Calvo Sotelo (a party modelled on Fascism) and those favouring a military dictatorship similar to that of Primo de Rivera. In the Army their propaganda was most active. Fascists and Royalists were said to be represented by about eighty-five per cent. of the officers, and although the rank and file were doubtful politically, the leaders of the Right Parties believed that with a careful propaganda, soldiers would follow their officers in a moment of crisis. In the spring of 1936 pamphlets in favour of Fascism were widely circulated in the Army, especially among officers. The effect of this propaganda showed itself later.

In the third week of May a number of officers stationed at Alcalá refused to obey orders, and were immediately



summoned before a court-martial. Capital punishment was demanded for the ringleaders. The speed and energy with which this military mutiny was crushed gave the public an indication of the new Premier's methods.

The principal weakness of the Right Parties was that they could not yet agree upon a programme.

In contrast to the disunity of the Right, there was a basic Left programme upon which most of the Left had agreed, and for which they were prepared—up to a point—to sink differences of doctrines and tactics, at all events for the present. Even to those who follow Spanish politics this state of comparative agreement amongst Left followers and sympathizers has been difficult to explain. The most reasonable explanation appears to be that the masses were shocked by the methods employed to suppress the rising in Asturias in 1934, when African and Foreign Legion troops were used to shoot down Spanish miners whose crime was to demand a living wage. In addition, there was the grave agrarian problem, with which is interlocked the welfare of the lower ranks of town workers. Both peasants and town workers had, until recently, taken little interest in politics—nearly all the peasants are illiterate, and the town workers have little education. But the Spanish peasant has at last learnt one lesson concerning his well-being, and it is that an estate owner who takes away all the profits of a peasant-worked soil, to spend them elsewhere, is their enemy. What is even worse, over vast areas land-owners had not even attempted to work the land—hence, hundreds of thousands of unemployed or suffering peasants, when every peasant knew that by working the land he could live comfortably.

In Andalucia, Extremadura, Castile, and elsewhere, the peasants had peaceably taken possession, and were now

working land, with every hope of having sufficient food from it for the forthcoming winter. The town workers knew that an abundance of food is to their advantage also, and that, on the whole, it is better to be on the side of food-producers than against them. This rough-and-ready economic philosophy was widely appreciated: Left Wing propagandists had seen to that. And so workers and peasants in Spain have been moving, and are moving, towards a political unity which is based upon dire economic necessity—it is not yet closely bound up with any elaborate or far-reaching programmes of political parties; and as yet it merely touches the fringe of such systems as Socialism or Communism or Anarchism.

The leaders of the various schools of Left Wing philosophy had not neglected to take advantage of the agrarian situation and its inter-communication with town workers' problems. Hence, for the first time in Spanish history, it was possible in 1936 to arrive at a basis of agreement among large masses of the population in regard to a political programme.

Recent estimates of membership of Left Parties were :

Anarchists . . . . .	1,500,000
Communists . . . . .	102,000
Socialists . . . . .	60,000
Labour . . . . .	2,000,000

On 10th May, at Zaragoza, the Anarcho-Syndicalist Congress proposed a political and revolutionary alliance with the Socialist General Labour Union, and the proposal was adopted. One of the principal items in this proposal was "the destruction of the present social and political régime." The General Labour Union did not immediately accept, but the suggestion was warmly welcomed by

Largo Caballero, the most important Left leader in Spain. He stated that when the alliance of the whole Left movement became an actual fact (and he was working for it) there would be no organized force, not even the State and its fighting machinery, capable of opposing the "rising tide of the masses."

Until a few months earlier it might have been possible to state that no such alliance amongst Spaniards was possible. Against this there is the very recent history of the *Frente popular*, which was formed for the purpose of capturing power in the Cortes. There was clearly a rapidly growing political consciousness in Spain, and it was being directed from the Left.

On the Left, the best disciplined and best organized group is the Communist. All Left Parties now believed that some form of revolutionary struggle must take place soon in order to make a complete clearance of the "Reformist" régime. That the revolutionary feeling had become widespread and intense could be estimated from popular manifestations in all parts of the country. The words of revolutionary songs took the place of the words of the traditional songs usually heard in places of popular amusement. The walls of village houses had scrawled upon them proletarian epigrams; the Communist salute had become commonplace, and there was Left propaganda everywhere. Spanish publishing houses, in response to public demands, were issuing innumerable volumes of proletarian literature, which was to be found on bookstalls and in bookshops everywhere, and was being read and discussed. At last Spaniards were seriously educating themselves in politics.

The country suffered severely during this period of political tension. In almost every town there had been labour agitation resulting in strikes, which, in some cases,

brought all forms of work to a standstill. Tramways ceased to function, and even railways were affected.

On 16th June, Señor Gil Robles, defending a Right Motion demanding of the Government measures for the restoration of order, informed the Cortes of recent damage to property and bloodshed: 160 churches destroyed; 251 churches damaged; people killed, 269; wounded, 1,287; buildings attacked or damaged, 381; strikes, 113; partial strikes, 228; newspaper offices attacked or destroyed, 43; bombs thrown, 146. All this, he said, had happened since the Popular's Front victory at the polls. His figures were challenged, but it is believed that they cannot be very inaccurate. His chief object in citing them was to show that the Government was not governing.

During the month of June, Madrid was alarmed by persistent rumours of Fascist plots to overthrow the Government. An army officer was arrested in connection with an attempt, organized by Royalists, in which, by masquerading as members of the Civil Guard, a revolt against the existing régime was to be initiated; the police captured a large consignment of uniforms sent from Zaragoza to Madrid for this purpose.

As a result of the elections the question of closing schools maintained by religious orders had become acute. Hitherto the Government had insisted on the letter of the Constitution being observed only in regard to schools maintained by the Jesuits; other religious orders were permitted to function, as secular teachers could not be found in sufficient numbers to take their place. During the months of May and June many of these establishments were peremptorily closed, and teachers and pupils ceased their activities. This drew protests from many parents who, whatever their political opinions might be, preferred to see their children

educated by a religious teacher rather than by none at all. In Madrid 20,000 unemployed State teachers demanded the immediate closing of Church schools on the grounds that, for the moment, there were sufficient secular teachers available.

Another result of the elections was the growth in the demands for regional autonomy. In Catalonia the new Statute was already working ; a Basque Statute was now being considered by a committee of the Cortes.

In June a demand came from the Province of Galicia, and discussions were started in favour of autonomy for Castile and Andalucia. In Valencia also there was the beginning of an autonomist movement. The idea of Federalism received support from both Right and Left Wing Parties, but the Madrid Government did not believe that the moment was opportune for devoting great attention to it.

This "reformist" and democratic Republican Government found themselves in the position of being menaced from the Right while having to rely chiefly upon the power of the Left for their existence and support—a Left which regarded the Government as a mere stop-gap, and having no confidence in the Prime Minister's ability to deal with any of the more serious problems of the country.

The whole of Spain was harassed by strikes, disorder, and violence. Gangster warfare, provoked by Fascists, showed itself on all sides in the beginning of July, and every Spaniard felt that only a spark was necessary to cause the outbreak of a general conflagration throughout the peninsula.

Assassinations and reprisals were occurring in every city, and, on the night of 12th July, a Lieutenant of the Shock

Police, named José Castillo, was murdered by Fascists. On the following day a group of men in the uniform of Shock Police entered the house of Señor Calvo Sotelo, the outstanding Leader of the Right, and murdered him in a singularly brutal manner. This act proved to be a culminating point in the Right-Left feud. The Government closed the Cortes, an emergency meeting of the Cabinet was called, and hundreds of arrests of Right supporters and of Right *Agents provocateurs* were made. Reports of a general rising by the Right were already current.

## X

### THE CIVIL WAR

ON 17th July newspapers outside Spain found that telephonic communication with their correspondents was severed for "serious political reasons," and, when re-established, it was known that a swift and well-organized military revolt, originating in the army in Morocco and prompted by Fascists, had begun. Garrisons in Barcelona, Seville, the Canary Islands, and in the principal cities of Spain had been seduced beforehand by the rebels. Morocco and an area in Spain, which included Granada, Algeciras, Seville (rebel headquarters), Córdoba, Merida, Valladolid, Burgos (northern rebel headquarters), Pamplona, Oviedo, and Zaragoza were quickly dominated by anti-Government forces, consisting of nine-tenths of the army with the Foreign Legion and Moroccan native troops, together with many newly enlisted men (including some foreign experts and aviators); the remainder of Spain was held by supporters of the Government.

The rugged, mountainous nature of Spain renders military operations extremely difficult in some places. The struggle soon developed into one of widespread, guerrilla war, slow-moving in regard to achievement, devastating in its horrors and atrocities, and everywhere, and by both sides, carried to a pitch of ruthlessness that has few parallels in history. It was a clash of two utterly irreconcilable Spains: inevitable and tragically sanguinary.

It is estimated that from 18th July to 31st September the casualties amounted to 400,000 killed, of which at least one quarter died, not on the battlefields, but by summary execution.\* No quarter was asked for by either side; and none given. When the rebels took Badajos, they executed 1,500 Government supporters as a reprisal, it is said, because the Government had killed hostages held against the threat of aerial bombardment. Failing other weapons, Asturian miners developed a technique of using sticks of dynamite, and, with an utter fatalism in regard to their own lives, repeatedly won success against artillery, machine guns, rifles, and bayonets in the hands of trained soldiers.

No sooner had this rebellion begun than the Government decided to arm the people. This was not only a necessary decision from a military point of view, but it proved to be extremely wise in a political sense. In the area occupied by Government forces it gained the confidence of the population in a manner which aroused enthusiasm for the Government's cause to fever pitch. The use of Moroccan troops and the Foreign Legion by the rebels had the effect in the territory occupied by the rebels of creating a suppressed hostility in the population.

There were indications everywhere that this Civil War must be a fight to the death. The destruction has been such that Spain cannot recover for a generation.

The fact that Madrid was immediately held by the

\* A French officer in command of a Spanish Government unit was quoted (*Sunday Express*, 11/10/36) as follows :

"Our general staff has attempted to count the total number of killed on all fronts. We have reached the appalling figure of 400,000 to 425,000."

"How many wounded ?"

He shrugged his shoulders and replied : "Well, you know, there are very few."



Government, and that both here and Barcelona were the two most important centres of organization, wealth, and communication, gave the Government a breathing space after the initial shock of the rebellion.

The leaders of the rebel military forces were Generals Franco (in the South) and Mola (in the North), with General Gonzalo Queipo de Llano in command at Seville. Nine-tenths of the whole Spanish Army supported the rebels. The Navy and Air Force remained loyal to the Government.

The rebellion was essentially one organized by Right elements—Monarchists, Fascists, landowners, Church, and property owners generally—against the democratic Republicans in power in Madrid. It was the old Spanish struggle between *Liberalism* and *Absolutism*, masquerading under the modern forms of Left and Right political ideology. It should be noted that when the rebellion began there was not among those in power in Madrid a Communist or even an extreme Socialist: the Quiroga Cabinet consisted entirely of moderate Republicans (they might in England be classified as Liberals).

But it was clear from the start that these men were too moderate in their views and too hesitant in their actions to satisfy public opinion in the area they controlled. President Azaña was the strongest and the ablest man on the Government side, and supporting the Government (but holding no office) was Largo Caballero, the Trade Union leader, whose popularity and power, following his astuteness in bringing about the Popular Front, had made him the outstanding figure in public estimate. He had moved from democratic Liberalism to Marxism, and is called the "Lenin of Spain."

In his efforts to produce a Cabinet capable of dealing

with the crisis, Señor Azaña made several experiments during July and August ; all of them unsuccessful. The Spanish public wanted Caballero, but Azaña feared that to give him the Premiership would be to hand over to the extreme Left the supreme power of the country. That issue, with its consequences, had sooner or later to be faced, and supporters of the Government felt that the sooner it could be settled the better. In the beginning of September a new Cabinet was formed with Caballero as Premier and Minister for War ; Señores Uribe and Hernandez (both Communists) Ministers for Agriculture and Education ; Señores Prieto, Del Vayo, and Negrin (Socialists) Admiralty, Air, Foreign Affairs, and Finance ; and D. José Giralt, Minister without Portfolio. This was definitely a Left Cabinet, representing the Popular Front. It had the support of the Anarchists.

From statements made to Press correspondents by General Franco it was soon possible to deduce some idea of his aims, which were as follows : (a) The establishment of a military dictatorship "to restore order and national economy, respect for life and property, and Government authority. Traditional social laws will be respected. Spanish prestige must be restored" ; (b) Politicians will in no circumstances be permitted to collaborate with the dictatorship ; (c) Administration will be by experts ; (d) "The *régime* which I shall establish," said General Franco, "will be based upon a corporative system analogous to that of Italy or Germany, but safeguarding the characteristics of Spanish traditionalism" \* ; (e) Supreme power will

\* In the *Sunday Times* of 4th October Scrutator said, "We must reject as too simple and superficial the view which sees in the war a struggle between Fascism and Communism only." Quite true. It was a struggle between *openly declared* Fascism and democracy.—C. P.

reside in a group of Army generals ; (f) Suffrage would be abolished.

On 1st August the French Government decided to appeal to the principal interested European Governments "for the rapid adoption and rigid observance of an agreed arrangement for non-intervention." The danger of the Spanish conflagration spreading had by this time become obvious. Evidence was being collected that help was being received by the rebels from outside Spain, and it was clear that a rebel victory based upon Italian or German help must result in a Government capable of affecting gravely British and French power in the Mediterranean. Furthermore, public opinion in Europe regarded the Spanish Civil War as a fight to the death between Fascism and Communism, and, as M. Delbos, French Foreign Minister, said on 3rd August, "There must be no crusade of ideals in Europe," because it must inevitably end in war. Great Britain was the first to reply to the French suggestion, agreeing in principle and offering suggestions to make the neutrality more comprehensive—in fact, aiming at "collective neutrality." The Madrid Government was a legally constituted one, and the rebels had no civil Government and no rights to claim to be a Government, beyond those of a revolting army which had captured a number of garrisons ; they could not be regarded as belligerents under international law.

By 9th August it was known that most of the European countries agreed in principle to non-intervention, but Portugal, Italy, and Germany's agreements were accompanied by reservations indicating difficulties in the way of acceptance, and the possibility of delays in the signature of any such agreement. The problem was intensified by the failure to reach an immediate military decision one way or the other in Spain, and the feeling that, even if the Govern-

ment should win in the end, the resultant Government must be an unstable one in a country reduced to chaos.

Meanwhile, armaments for the rebels flowed into Spain from many sources, increasing the forces of terror within the country and aggravating suspicion between nation and nation outside. While the rebels were being helped from abroad, "non-intervention" meant that the Madrid Government could not expect help from democratic countries.

In the face of this increasingly dangerous situation Great Britain, on 19th August, prohibited the export of arms and munitions of all kinds to Spain, and this prohibition included civil and military aircraft. This decision was followed by German and Italian "acceptance" of non-intervention and neutrality, with an embargo on the export of arms and munitions.

Portugal accepted "with reservations" by the end of the month, by which time disclosures in many foreign newspapers claimed that the Spanish rebels were using Lisbon as their point of contact with supporters outside of Spain, and that Portugal was the main route for supplies of all sorts to the rebel armies. Neutrality was agreed to by Austria, Bulgaria, Belgium, Denmark, Turkey, Albania. Thus *open* alignment of Fascist against non-Fascist countries was momentarily side-tracked and obscured.

No statement regarding the finance available to the Government was made after the outbreak of the rebellion, but the fact that control of Madrid was in Government hands made available the resources of the Bank of Spain : 2,000 million pesetas gold, and 1,000 million pesetas silver. Thus Spain possessed the largest gold reserve in Europe, after England and France. The Bank of Spain had a close collaboration agreement with the Bank of France, in which

it had deposited a considerable stock of gold. This situation, as will be appreciated, would have given advantages to the Government (whose chief military difficulty was a pathetic and desperate shortage of armaments because of the capture of so many garrisons and storehouses by the rebels) but for "non-intervention." In territory occupied by the rebels an effort was made to bring into existence a "Bank of Spain" on the grounds that forty-three of the seventy-one branches of this bank were under rebel control. The Burgos directors of the bank held a council in the last week of August co-opting leading private bankers. Meanwhile, finance of the rebel movement was provided by its supporters amongst landowners, industrialists, and their backers, operating through Lisbon. For them it was "*pay out now or lose all*"!

While in the Government area there were many sympathisers with the rebels, the fact that the Government called the population to its aid, and showed its confidence by arming them, meant silence and inactivity by rebel supporters. In the rebel areas the presence of nearly 18,000 (later increased to 25,000) Moroccan troops incensed the civil population, including many Catholics who might otherwise have supported Generals Franco and Mola.

By the end of September evidence was accumulating to show that in the rebel area it had become increasingly necessary to use violence and terrorism to keep the population under control. Without help from abroad the rebels could not have maintained their control so long. In Morocco, also, there were signs of insurrection against the rebel control.

## XI

### NON-INTERVENTION AND THE BROAD ISSUES

It is hardly necessary in this book to give a detailed description of the Spanish Civil War.\* Nor will it be possible for a long time to be sure of all the facts regarding it. It must be sufficient to record here that it has been one of the most cruel and bloodthirsty wars in the history of mankind : tragic in every sense. A great people has been decimated and materially ruined as a result of an uprising inspired, planned, and started by the Right. From a political point of view the most interesting feature of the situation was that, because of the help rendered to the rebels by Germany, Italy, and Portugal, it was obvious that for the first time in history FASCISM WAS RAPIDLY TURNING INTO AN INTERNATIONAL FORCE. Spain was the point of its onslaught against democracy, the public battleground for the fight. That external help came to the rebels there is now no doubt whatever. Newspaper correspondents in all parts of Spain saw with their own eyes unchallengeable evidence of it : German steel helmets on the heads of rebel soldiers in the north ; German and Italian aeroplanes ; light tanks ; parts for aeroplanes ; bombs and grenades ; ammunition, petrol, and so forth. A glance at a map of the Peninsula indicates one obvious land route over which such external help could travel to reach the rebels : Portugal. Conclusive

\* The reader is referred to *Reporter in Spain*, by F. Pitcairn (Wishart), October 1936—an excellent *reportage*.

evidence of Portuguese help was soon forthcoming, and there was for a moment a real danger that the Fascist Portuguese Republic might *openly* declare itself on the side of the rebels. That might have started a European war. In Spain itself evidence was discovered that when Gil Robles had been Minister of War ten months previously he and Generals Franco and Mola had made elaborate preparations for the Civil War, and they had prepared secret gun emplacements all along the Guadarrama mountains. Happily for the Government, many loyalist officers were very well aware of this. At the Montana barracks, in Madrid, documents were unearthed in August providing further evidence of a Fascist conspiracy. Thousands of copies of a manifesto were found. It was to be distributed after a Fascist "March on Madrid." The military rebellion had been fixed by General Franco for the autumn, but the murder of Calvo Sotelo was considered by the reactionaries to be an excellent signal for revolt.

It may be useful to turn for a moment and look at little Portugal, whose government has played a very rascally part in this unpleasant business. Since the arrival in power there of General Carmona and his Jesuit Prime Minister, Oliveira Salazar, this country has been in the grip of a dictatorship which is as ruthless as it is unspectacular. Salazar has a flair that is Jesuitical for the suppression of truth about Portugal. He has succeeded, for example, in persuading the Portuguese people and the outside world that he is a "financial wizard" because he balanced that curious phenomenon the National Budget of Portugal. For several years he has published a statement which is nothing but an arrangement of accounts and bookkeeping, all with the object of showing that the country has a *surplus* in hand. These statements deceived everybody but experts, and

experts of the League of Nations were not slow to point out grave disparities between the true financial situation and that advertised by the wily Salazar. There is no need to fill these pages with statistics, but let it suffice to record here that, whereas Salazar's Budget for 1934-35 claimed a surplus of 1,504 contos (that is, about £15,000), the League of Nations experts assessed a deficit of 280,000 contos (or £2,800,000) ! The disparity was even greater in previous years.

Under the dictatorship of this man, Portugal has suffered misery. Living went up by forty per cent. ; education was neglected, and social services were negligible. The Jesuits, who had been banished from the Republic on its creation in 1910, were able to come back and comfortably reassert their old influence. The priestly class everywhere was re-established. The aspect of the Fascist régime in Portugal, about which least is known abroad, is the internal espionage system, which, in that little country, costs *one million* pounds compared with the annual £250,000 or so deemed necessary for the whole Secret Service of the British Empire. Another very unsavoury aspect of it all is the establishment of a political Inquisition, which works *sub rosa* in penal establishments. Here political prisoners are tortured in a manner which in some respects is more abominable than that which prevailed during the Inquisition of the Holy Catholic Church. The present writer has no desire to make the flesh of his readers creep by recounting the Star Chamber methods employed by that devout Catholic, Salazar. As reported\* by those who suffered, they include thumbscrews, burning the soles of the feet, squeezing the head in book-presses, hanging by wrists and ankles, nude imprisonment in temperatures below zero, and walking

\* See the article in *Time and Tide* (Sept. 12, 1936) by H. G. Dobby.



in a circle until the prisoner drops. Nor is Salazar altogether behind the times in regard to science : he uses an electric chair to provide shocks at regularly recurrent intervals for the prisoners who may be a little more strong-minded than the average ! When a prisoner dies, he is reported to have " committed suicide," and the number of prison " suicides " in contemporary Portugal is in itself enough to shake anybody's confidence in the régime that is responsible for them. Thousands of Portuguese who have shown their disapproval of this dictatorship have been sent to unsavoury parts of the tropics and placed under the charge of black troops. It will be interesting to know how many of them will ever return alive to their native country !

The chief reason that this vile dictatorship is not better known abroad is that the Portuguese Government has shown no sign of an aggressive foreign policy. It has concerned itself almost entirely with internal affairs, and foreign newspapers have not bothered very much about it, because Portugal is unimportant. It is only since the outbreak of the Civil War in Spain, and the undisguised help which Portugal has given to the Spanish rebels, that has caused it to come into the picture at all. Franco's revolt almost became Salazar's war ! Foreign newspaper correspondents, although perfectly aware of the huddle of leaders of the Spanish revolt in the Hotel Aviz in Lisbon, scarcely troubled to keep a sharp eye on the border that touches Spain. Here the by-roads of Portugal were often blocked with caravans of arms and ammunition destined for the Spanish rebels. It was one of the most flagrant breaches of international law in history, and all under a hypocritical cloak of neutrality and " non-intervention."

As for the open assistance rendered by Italy, nothing could be more flagrant, for example, than the activities of

the Italian Fascist General Conte di Rossi, who, towards the end of September, according to the newspaper *Ultima Hora*, published at Palma in the Balearic Islands, rode at the head of a rebel parade in Majorca. At that moment there were at Palma about a hundred Italian aviators and mechanics disguised in uniforms of the Spanish Foreign Legion, but wearing silk handkerchiefs in Italian colours round their necks. Italian ships with munitions and aeroplanes were arriving almost daily. According to the *News Chronicle* of 29th September: "On 27th August at 8 p.m. a nameless ship with an Italian crew arrived at Palma, escorted by an Italian destroyer, and discharged 160 tons of war material. She left at dawn, but returned at nightfall to finish unloading. Two days later, convoyed by an Italian tri-motor 'plane, three tri-motor bombers arrived. Two days later came three more. On 7th September the steamer *Nereide*—out of Genoa with the Italian flag at the poop—met a British warship in the bay. At night she discharged 360 tons of war material, including bombs. Italian material delivered at Palma includes six tri-motor bombers, three pursuit 'planes, three pursuit hydroplanes, three hydroplane bombers, eight anti-aircraft guns, equipment for one radio-telephone station, hand grenades, and spare parts for 'planes."

What more evidence of "non-intervention" could be desired:

German help for the rebels will be mentioned later. The important point about all this is that Germany, Italy, and Portugal have been *undisguisedly* giving assistance to a *military revolt against legally constituted government* in Spain. They have been unashamedly helping towards the establishment of a Fascist régime in that country. They have been assisting against the consolidation of a democratic régime,

which had found Parliamentary representation by the system of suffrage provided for in the Spanish Constitution. The *Evening Standard* of 24th July reported an interview with ex-King Alfonso, in which the following passage occurs: "*The monarchy, in common with the Conservative parties, only desires a complete disappearance of the Left Parties. . . . In my opinion, only the extermination, once and for all, of the Left Parties will put an end to this Civil War, and will give Spain the peace so much desired by all true Spaniards.*"

Of the manner in which the revolting Spanish Fascists conducted their campaign against the democratic Government, reliable English newspapers have testified. The Fascist generals at Albacete exterminated "all persons of the Left" (*Times*, 6th August). "Monarchists had placed bombs among the wheat sheaves in order to blow up innocent peasants" (*Times*, 6th August). "In La Campana, near Seville, scores of prisoners were burnt in jail. . . . Rebel troops machine-gunned practically the whole population, and burned the village to the ground" (*News Chronicle*, 7th August). No more appalling atrocity is on record than that carried out by the rebel force of Moors and Foreign Legionaries which captured Badajoz. The *Times* (17th August) headed its story: "Savagery at Badajoz: Mass Executions," and reports 1,200 shot in cold blood. A Portuguese journalist, who was the first to enter the town after its capture by the rebels, reported: "A red blood-stained wall at the Commandancia, perforated with bullets, shows the spot where some 2,000 men were executed by the rebels. 'Well, perhaps not quite as many as that,' said Colonel Yague, the rebel ruler of Badajoz, when I mentioned to him this figure of 2,000, which I had been told" (*Manchester Guardian*, 17th August).

The same correspondent tells of ruined, blood-stained

streets "haunted by the pitiful figures of women and children dressed in deepest mourning, who move furtively about looking for the bodies of their loved ones." Reuter's correspondent telegraphed from Lisbon the following day : "The execution of the Government supporters by Moorish troops, which, with rebel militia, wrested Badajoz from the Government's hands two days ago, continues. Corpses are being burnt on huge pyres—to avoid trouble and waste of time, it is stated." French Press correspondents told of many victims who sought sanctuary in the cathedral, and were butchered on the steps of the high altar. This by the "Christian" rebels !

On the 14th September His Holiness the Pope addressed a number of Spanish refugees who, as supporters of Church, landowners, and rebels, had been forced to flee from Spain. He spoke of his horror of war in general and of Civil War in particular. He enumerated "persecutions" against the Catholic Church in Spain, but he did not give the reason why masses of Spanish Catholics have turned against that same Church. He mentioned the executions which had been carried out by the Government ; but he did not utter one word deploring the frightful massacre by hired infidels at Badajoz. Indeed, he took upon himself an openly pro-Fascist attitude, and gave the impression that the Civil War in Spain was a kind of holy war !

On the 29th September the English Bishop of Winchester in his address to the Diocesan Conference made the following statement : "I feel it impossible to regard as Christian a movement whose leaders use Moslem Moors against their fellow countrymen ; who shoot captives whose only crime is that they have fought for the Government to whom they have given their obedience, and whose cruelties in reprisals have been apparently as frequent and barbarous as those

committed by their foes who claim no allegiance to Christ." He might have added that the rebels had all broken their solemn oath of allegiance to the Madrid Government. In his Monthly Letter of October to his diocese the Archbishop of York described as ridiculous the efforts made to persuade the English people that the military rebels in Spain represented "Christianity in conflict with atheism."

"There was a constitutional Government in Spain, rather weak and ineffective, but legally established," he said. "The patriotic course would have been to rally to it and increase its authority, and especially to strengthen its control over its turbulent extremists. Instead of this the military chiefs initiated an armed rebellion. . . . No result was from that time forward either possible or conceivable which is not clearly disastrous."

On 2nd October General Franco had himself solemnly invested at Burgos with the title of Commander-in-Chief of the insurgent army and "Chief of the Spanish State." In the course of the speech which he made afterwards to an enthusiastic crowd he said that the insurrection had as its motive the salvation of Spain, "A land of hidalgos and nobles." The insurgents, he declared, were defending the heritage of their ancestors. The Spanish empire was to be revived. On the following day General Franco issued a decree providing for the establishment of an administration with *juntas* of defence, justice, commerce, and industry, agriculture, labour, education, and public works, etc. "This new State," he pledged, "will give social justice to all, with a hearth and bread guaranteed to all workers. There will be no suffrage, but the country will be re-organized on ideally Spanish lines." He meant, of course, ideally reactionary lines. In other words, he caused to be constituted a government established purely by force as

a rival to that which had been established on a basis of democratic public opinion. All this was clearly done with the object of gaining prestige for the rebels, and in order to embarrass the representative of the legitimate government in his efforts to protest at Geneva against the help which had been rendered and was being rendered by Germany, Italy, and Portugal to the insurgents. Franco was quite honest and sincere about it all. In a military sense, the campaign had so far gone in favour of the rebels. The surprising feature of that campaign was that those rebel forces, representing nine-tenths of the trained and equipped army, had not yet succeeded in winning a decisive victory over the ill-trained and very ill-equipped Government forces, which they had taken completely by surprise. The fact was that the Government, with behind it the ordinary people, the workers and peasants, and an intense feeling of the sheer justice of their cause, had held up the rebels and created a military position almost of deadlock when, by all the rules of the game, the trained and externally helped army of the rebels ought to have finished the whole business in less than a month. It was a remarkable example of what a people can do.

How great was the help rendered from outside to the rebels was disclosed to the League of Nations. Definite and documented charges of intervention in the Spanish Civil War by Germany, Italy, and Portugal were made in Notes published at Geneva on 1st October by the Spanish delegation. In his Note to the German Government, Señor del Vayo, Spanish Foreign Minister, protesting against "continual aid sent to the rebels from Germany," specified as instances :

1. The landing at Azuaga, on 9th August, for want of petrol, of a Junker 52 war aeroplane.

2. The arrival, on 10th August, at Los Alcazares, of a Junker 52, which asked by radio if the aerodrome were in the hands of the Government or of the rebels, and learning that it was in the hands of the Government, flew off.

3. The appearance after this date of *squadrons* of military Junkers in increasing numbers. "The rebels now have not only the 'planes with which they began the war, but others far more powerful, coming largely from Germany and arriving every day in larger numbers."

4. Landing at Lisbon by the vessels *Kamerun* and *Visberg* of petrol, light tanks, dismounted aeroplanes, bombs, and hand grenades, which were sent through Portugal by lorry to Badajoz and Salamanca.

The whole evidence, added Señor del Vayo, "shows the existence of armed aid to the rebels, which is incompatible with the rules of international law."

From the beginning of the military rebellion, said the Note to the Italian Government, the Spanish Government had accumulated proof that the rebels had received constant aid in the form of arms, munitions, and men from Italy. The Note recalled that, as far back as last July, six fully armed seaplanes, piloted by Italian military pilots whose names are given, made a forced landing on French territory in Algeria. They were en route to the rebel centres of Melilla and Ceuta. On another occasion twenty-four Italian 'planes were landed at the rebel port of Vigo from an Italian merchant ship. A photograph of an incriminating statement made by an Italian air sergeant, who was taken prisoner after his Italian 'plane had crashed, was also put in.

The Note to Portugal said that the rebels, since the beginning of the Civil War, had used Portugal as one of their chief bases. (British journalists and eye-witnesses had already reported this.) On the eve of the capture of

Badajoz three rebel 'planes, it was stated, landed in Portuguese territory. "Contrary to international law," the Spanish Government declared, "the handing over of Spanish political refugees to the rebel generals has been permitted."

At Geneva it soon became apparent that the legitimate Spanish Government would encounter great difficulties in making its protest in the least effective. There were ridiculous delays, and it was clear that the same game of postponing action was to be played as the game of delay which had been started by the Committee of Non-intervention, which had sat in London a week or so earlier, and had postponed itself to consider a number of footling technicalities !

Everybody knew by this time that the policy of neutrality and non-intervention was working out in practice as a virtual blockade of the legal government at Madrid.

It may well be argued that, by rendering lip-service to an alleged neutrality, the British and French Governments prevented the outbreak of a European conflagration. One sees immediately the dangers in a situation in which nations would take sides against one another in order to fight out on the Spanish front the problem of *Fascism* versus *Democracy*. In England public opinion was divided, one section of the people being in favour of the rebels and authoritarian government, not realizing what that means in Spain, and caring even less. On the other hand, the liberal and democratic ideas of the man in the street were shocked and appalled by the tragic cynicism and impertinence of the Spanish military rebels and their paymasters in challenging the existence of a legally constituted government, whose only crime was that it proposed to reduce the Roman Catholic Church to the status of a non-political, non-com-



mercial religious body with only a spiritual mission ; to abolish an abominable system of *latifundia* which had desolated and impoverished vast areas of Spain ; and to provide bread for the people.

Clearly the struggle between Fascism and Democracy was resolving itself into a clash of opinion not only in Spain but over the greater part of the civilized world. All eyes were turned on the Spanish Front, where it was being fought out. It was there that the first round of a great forthcoming fight was taking place. The significance and vital importance of the struggle was apparent to all intelligent observers from the very beginning. It is not yet fully realized by the average Englishman, who imagines that the Spanish Civil War was a local affair.

As this book goes to press there has not yet been a definite military decision. But the issues are clear. In the first place, if the military rebels should win, there will be created a totalitarian state on Fascist lines, and without the slightest doubt this totalitarian state will form an alliance with Italy, and possibly also with Germany. That means the complete isolation of France and the nullification of the British military alliance with France. If, as Mr. Baldwin once declared, England's frontier is on the Rhine, that frontier must inevitably be weakened if France has to keep a standing army along the Pyrenees. Furthermore, *a Fascist Spain allied to Fascist Italy means the end of British and French power in the Mediterranean.* It is obvious that this is what the Italian Government and the Vatican have been aiming at by supporting the Spanish rebels. In other words, the balance of power in Europe, which has been the basis of British foreign policy since before 1914, and which is calculated to serve as a purely defensive measure for Great Britain—all that goes by the board and a completely new

orientation in European affairs must be considered. It is hardly necessary to emphasize how dangerous the resultant possibilities will be for European peace. One may go a little further and assert with some confidence that out of that new orientation a European war must inevitably spring. It is difficult to see how it can be avoided.

On the other hand, what would the position be in the event of the democratic Government at Madrid achieving success? It is assumed in England that the success of the Madrid Government would result in the establishment of something in the nature of a Soviet system in Spain. That might happen, but not immediately. The official spokesman of the Spanish Communist Party made the following statement in June 1936: "We are not putting forward to-day, as the immediate objective, to pass from the completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution to a socialist revolution for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. We are aiming at the *completion and fulfilment of a democratic revolution*, which is the main concern for the Spanish people at the present moment." My italics. It is the republican democrats who would have to do most of the preliminary work for a Communistic Left in Spain.

If General Franco succeeds in establishing military rule, it would be a grave mistake to assume that the Spanish people will submit to it. A people to whom rifles have been given do not easily abandon them. The Spaniards have on many occasions in the past, and in this Civil War in particular, proved themselves to be redoubtable exponents of guerrilla warfare. If Franco achieves power, that guerrilla warfare will continue or be resumed: no army has yet succeeded in suppressing a whole people. There is no comparison between the political situation in Spain and Italy or Germany. Hitler achieved power by his passionate de-

termination to put Germany back on the political map of Europe, and to restore the dignity of the German people. He achieved power by vote because he was able to show the German people how they could relieve themselves of the indignities they had suffered from the wicked Treaty of Versailles. Mussolini achieved power in Italy by promising and achieving a sort of general physical and psychological renaissance, after a period of political corruption and decadence. None of these factors applies to Spain, where the problem is a very simple one of bread and freedom for the ordinary people.

So there is every likelihood of a continuation of unrest in Spain until these ends have been achieved. It has been mentioned earlier that the Anarchists are the dominating factor in contemporary Spanish politics. If the democratic Government or the people of Spain should at last free themselves from the danger of military and clerical rule, it is possible that the Anarchists might endeavour to impose an entirely new system of administration, one which would attempt to go much further in the way of "democratization" than Marxian Communism. We may well live to see in Spain the evolution of a new philosophic Anarchism, which will be a complete reaction against all systems which dragoon and condition the people. It would be a reaction against both Fascism and Communism. It would be based essentially on the old slogan of the French Revolution: Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. And it would be a Spanish reaction against Absolutism. Whether this would work out to be in the long run for the benefit of the Spanish people one cannot tell. What seems to be fairly certain is that, before such a point can be reached, Spain must pass through a period of either Fascism, or Communism, or both.

It is sometimes assumed in England that the establishment of a "Red" Government in Spain would be disadvantageous to Great Britain. Here one may inquire whether Fascism in Italy or Hitlerism in Germany have proved to be more advantageous to Great Britain or less dangerous than Communism in Russia? Is it not obvious to the meanest intelligence that the success of Fascism in Italy has been ruinous to British interests in the Mediterranean and the Near East? Is it not equally obvious that the success of a democratic Government in Spain, one that was friendly to this country, would largely offset the power that has been achieved by Italy in the Mediterranean? Has the establishment of Hitlerism in Germany benefited Great Britain? It would be interesting to know how and where. It would also be interesting to know how a devastating European war can be avoided if Hitler continues to succeed in his programme. And so the English people must needs turn to Spain as the country which may offer many advantages to Great Britain. It is rather late in the day to do so, especially as the Spanish people believe that behind the help rendered by Portugal to Franco's rebels there is the complete approval of the British Government. Portugal is a political and financial vassal of England, and quite incapable of offering any resistance to British friendship with Spain. The English Government had at any moment only to say the word, and Portuguese help for the Spanish rebels would have ceased. The world knows that, and concludes that the British Government from the beginning wished the rebels to succeed. Looking at the broader issues, one is justified in concluding that the British Government prefers the later phases of a brutal Fascism to the later phases of a greatly modified and greatly toned-down Communism, which, notwithstanding all the faults and shortcomings

it may have, really does attempt to help ordinary people, and to free them from the evils of clericalism, landlordism, usury, ignorance, and poverty.

The Civil War in Spain may be the first taste of a world war in which the two forces represent two different conceptions of life which, for want of better words, may be described as Absolutism and Democracy. The Spanish struggle is, ideologically, an international one—a world-wide one. It represents a problem which must be solved in every country. Vast interests are involved everywhere, on both sides. In Spain we see them at work, and we may learn from Spain something of the nature of a world struggle which seems inevitable.

That is the *real* significance behind the Spanish Front.

The Spaniard, as represented by Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, is a significant person in the world to-day. He is full of idealism and of pride of race and ancestry, and accepts bravely the immediate duty before him. He has a more or less dim consciousness of a mission, and that mission is to show the rest of the world that he believes in himself and his ability to order his life so that he may enjoy a peaceful prosperity. If the Roman Catholic Church, the generals, and the landlords imagine that they can prevent him from achieving this very reasonable end they are utterly mistaken. The struggle may continue for a long time, but there can be only one conclusion: the ordinary people of Spain will win their birthright. Nothing can prevent them as long as they show the hereditary qualities of the race, so remarkably demonstrated in the Civil War.

Spain *must* change her system, and the Right has no desire to change it. If the Left is to succeed it must be united, and be very strong and well organized. And it must not be thwarted *from outside*.

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